Humane Life:

OR, A

SECOND PART

OF THE

ENQUIRY

AFTER

HAPPINESS.

By the AUTHOR of *Practical Christianity.*

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HUMANE

HUMANE LIFE:

OR, A SECOND PART OF THE Enquiry after Happineſs.

INTRODUCTION.

I Am not Ignorant, that Dedications and Prefaces, if they have in them a genius of Eloquence, if they ſparkle with Wit and Fancy; if they be enriched with Senſe, and animated by moving and vital Language, are like graceful Acceſſes, and beautiful Fronts to Buildings; which, while they raiſe in the Beholder a ſecret Delight, do prepoſſeſs him with favourable Opi-

nions of them: But this being only a Continuation of a former Treatiſe, and having little Encouragement either from my Humour or Talents to any attempt of that Kind, I ſhall never ſuffer my ſelf to be unneceſſarily engaged in it. I will therefore in this place only give a ſhort Account of what I have performed in the Firſt Volume, and deſign in This: In the First Section *I ſhewed that Happineſs was neither ſo great and divine a Poſſeſſion, as to be above the Ambition of Man, nor ſo inconſiderable, as not to deſerve it: And next, that it was not to be expected from Time or Chance, Fancy or Inclination; but from Reaſon and Induſtry, Virtue and Religion. In the* Second, *having firſt briefly ſtated the Notion of Happineſs, I endeavoured to demonſtrate*

monſtrate the poſſibility of obtaining it, and to reſcue ſo important a Truth from the Prejudices and Objections that might ſtifle and oppreſs it. In the Third, *I juſt pointed out the Cauſes of Humane Miſery, or of unſucceſsfulneſs in this Enquiry, and the Remedies of it.*

Having thus removed whatever might diſcourage or fruſtrate our Endeavours after Happineſs, I am now to proceed to a more ſtrict and particular Examination of the Nature of it, and the Ways and Methods that lead to it. In which I am obliged, according to the General Deſign or Scheme laid down in the former Volume, to treat of Life, Perfection, Indolence, *and* Fruition; *accordingly I here begin with Life; and dividing this Book into Three Sections, I will, in the*

First, *Diſcourſe of the True Notion of Humane Life. In the* Second, *Of the right Conduct or Regulation of two different kinds of Life, Active and Contemplative. In the* Third, *Of the right Husbanding Humane Life, by prolonging and improving it.*

SECT.

SECT. I.

Of the True Notion of Life.

CHAP. I.

Life a great Bleſſing in it ſelf. Proves a great Evil to ſome. And why? Happineſs perfect only in Heaven.

THough Life render us capable of Pain as well as Pleaſure, yet has it ever been valued as the richeſt Bleſſing; the Love of it is the earlieſt and the ſtrongeſt Principle in us; it moves the Infant before he knows how to rate the Pleaſures of Life, or can apprehend any Evil in Death; it grows up to ſtrength and maturity in Man, and is the Sovereign Paſſion in him, to which all the reſt pay Homage; *Skin for skin, and all that a Man has will he give for his Life:* Age does very little diminiſh it, and Miſery it ſelf cannot extinguiſh it. Nor does this Paſſion want the ſuffrage of the wiſeſt and the greateſt Men, or the approbation of God; for

one chief design of Society and Government, of Laws and Arms, is the protection of Life; and God, who best understood the bent of Humane Nature, has proposed, as the biggest Blessing and powerfullest Motive to Obedience, a long Life (I examine not now what it farther prefigured) under the Old Testament, and an Eternal one under the New. And for all this there is plain Reason; for Life, if it be not, when rightly understood, Happiness it self, yet is it surely the Foundation of it; and the Foundation in a Building, if it be not as Beautiful as upper Stories, yet is ever as Necessary. I wonder not therefore that the Sentence of Death shook the Piety of *Hezekiah*, and the Courage of *Saul*, so that the one *wept sore*, and the other *fell to the ground*.

But to all this will it not be objected, Alas! How many are there, who all their days are no more sensible of the good of Life, than of the Pleasures and Repasts of a Dream; who being come to Threescore Years and ten, that is, to Die, do not yet understand what it is to Live? Ah! how many, which is yet worse, to whom Life is a Burden, and yet to

Death

Death a Terror; who when they are to give back the Breath of Life, have juſt reaſon to wiſh they had never received it, and to curſe the Day that they were born? And do not *Elijah*, *Job*, *Solomon*, *Jeremy*, *Eſdras*, and many others, great and good Men, talk of Life at a different rate from what I here do, and repreſent it to us under another Notion, and quite contrary Character? *Better is the day of death than the day of one's birth. Let the day periſh wherein I was born, and the night wherein it was ſaid, there is a man-child conceived.* The Reflection of *Eſdras* on the common miſery of Mankind, has as much weight and ſenſe, as *Job*'s on his own, has paſſion; *For what profit is it for Men now in this preſent time to live in heavineſs, and after death to look for Puniſhment?* Theſe and ſuch like Paſſages we meet with every where, which ſeem to give us no very taking Idea of Life. To all this I anſwer, 'Tis with Life as with all other Bleſſings, the right uſe of it is our Happineſs; the abuſe of it our Miſery. There is nothing in the Nature of the thing that implies Evil or Trouble; nor has it any neceſſary and inevitable tendency to it. We

muſt not therefore eſtimate a Bleſſing by the miſchief it occaſions to ſuch as pervert and abuſe it; nor by the Complaints which Humane Frailty ſometimes forces from wiſe and good Men in a melancholy fit; or finally by the Reflections they ſometimes make, not on the intrinſick worth, or natural tendency of Life, but on the Evils which flow from the Corruption or Depravation of it. 'Tis true, when all is ſaid, Heaven is the proper Region of Happineſs; there it dwells in its Glory and Majeſty, in all its Fulneſs and Excellence; but what then? Becauſe Perfection does properly belong to Heaven, is there no Virtue upon Earth? Becauſe all things are in their maturity and conſummation there, ſhall we deny that there is any ſweetneſs or beauty here? Juſt ſo muſt we think of the Happineſs of this, in compariſon of that of another World; it is here in its Infancy, we do ſlumber, and are ſcarcely ever fully awake; we ſee little, penetrate and comprehend leſs; and we move very feebly and unſteadily; but all this while we grow up to ſtrength, we advance towards Perfection, our Joynts grow firmer, our Stature increaſes, our Underſtanding

ing dawns towards day, and our Affections are gradually animated with a more generous and laſting heat; ſo that all this while this infant ſtate of Happineſs is pleaſant and promiſing, and every ſtep in the whole progreſs towards Perfection, preſents us with freſh Beauties and Delights; but I know no Body ſo fantaſtick, as to deſpiſe the preſent Life, becauſe it is not equal to that above; and he that thinks there is none above, ſets the more value on this, becauſe he has nothing more or farther to expect. I will not therefore ſpend any more time in endeavouring to prove Life a valuable Bleſſing, but rather proceed to ſhew how every Man may really make it ſuch to himſelf, which I think I cannot more compendiouſly do, than by ſtating the True Notion of Humane Life; for as our Miſery flows from the abuſe, and our Happineſs from the right uſe of Life, ſo does the abuſe from Falſe, and the right uſe from True Notions of it.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Life, What in a Natural Sense, what in a Moral. Life, Perfection, and Enjoyment, inseparably united. More particularly, Life consists not in Sloth, Sensuality, Worldliness, Devilishness, but in the Regulation of all our Actions according to right Reason.

LIFE may be considered either in a Natural or Moral Sense; in the former acceptation, what it is, is an Enquiry very abstruse and intricate, like the *Egyptian Nile*, though its Streams be visible to every Eye, its Source or Fountain is concealed; or like Grace, though we feel its Energy, and taste its Fruits, yet we cannot discover and define its Essence; but to carry our discovery thus far, is accuracy enough in Moral Discourses, whose end is not Speculation, but Happiness.

Life then, whatever it be in the Fountain and Essence, as far as we can discern it, is nothing else but that force and vigour which moves and acts the Man; and to live, speaking in a Natural Sense, is to exert the Powers and Facul-

ties

ties of Nature; according to which account of Life, 'tis capable of as many Notions as are the different Offices it performs; 'tis Senſe and Motion in the Body; 'tis Perception and Fancy in the Imagination; 'tis Knowledge in the Underſtanding; and Love and Hate, with all their Train or Retinue of Paſſions, in the Heart or Soul.

Now becauſe all Morality conſiſts in the right Uſe of thoſe Bleſſings which our great and bountiful Author confers upon us, therefore, in a Moral Senſe, the true Life of Man is nothing elſe but the right Uſe of our whole Nature; an active employing it in its due Functions and Offices, a vigorous Exerciſe of all our Power and Faculties, in a manner ſuitable to the Dignity and Deſign, to the Frame and Conſtitution of our Beings. To live then, in a Moral Senſe, is to know and contemplate, to love and purſue that which is the true Good of Man; this is the Life of the Underſtanding, Will, Affections, and of the whole Man; and whatever acts of ours are not ſome way or other converſant about Truth and Goodneſs, are not properly Acts of Humane Life, but Devlations from it.

And

And here I cannot chuſe but pauſe a little, to admire and magnifie the infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the Almighty Architect, who has contrived an inſeparable Connection and neceſſary Dependance between Life, Perfection, and Fruition; every rational Act, every right Uſe or Exertion of our Natural Powers and Faculties, as it is of the Eſſence of Moral Life, ſo does it contribute to the Improvement and Perfection of our Beings, and to the Pleaſure and Felicity of our State; for Perfection is the Reſult of ſuch repeated Acts, and Pleaſure of our entertaining our ſelves with proper and agreeable Objects. Happy Man! to whom, to live, improve, and enjoy, is the ſame thing; who cannot defeat God's Goodneſs and his own Happineſs, but by perverting his Nature, and depraving his Faculties; but by making an ill uſe, or none at all, of the Favours and Bounties of God.

If we examine this Notion of Life more cloſely, and diſtinctly, and reſolve this general Account of it, into ſeveral Particulars, we ſhall eaſily arrive at a fuller and clearer Comprehenſion of it.

Firſt,

First, 'Tis evident from this Account of Life, that it does not consist in *Sloth*, in the meer Marriage or Cohabitation of Soul and Body; in meer Duration or Continuance in this World. *Solomon*, indeed, out of a natural Abhorrence of Death, tells us, *Truly light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the Sun*, Eccl.2.7. Something it is, if we must call it Pleasure, 'tis but a faint and low one, such as all the Irrational Creatures but Bats, and Owls, and Moles, are capable of; but according to my Philosophy, it can never deserve the Name of Life: He that possesses Vital Powers and Faculties, is in a Capacity of Life, but he only that exerts them, lives. To live, is not to spend or wast our time, but to employ it: 'Tis a lamentable History of Life, when it can all be summed up in the few Syllables of a Funeral Ring; he lived to, or rather, as it is wont to be expressed, he died such a Day of the Month, such a Year of his Age; for indeed he lived not at all; Life is a meer Dream; not only on the account of its shortness, but also of its Night and Lethargy, when stupid Ignorance confines and dims the Prospect, and Sluggishness

neſs enfeebles all the Powers of the Mind: Vigour and Activity, Fruition and Enjoyment, make up Life; without theſe, Life is but an imperfect Embryo, a mingled Twilight that never will be Day; the Images, which the ſlothful form of things, are faint and obſcure, like Pictures drawn in watery Colours, and weak and imperfect Stroaks, and vaniſh as eaſie as thoſe half Sounds and imperfect Forms which we take in between ſleep and waking; all their Paſſions move drowſily and heavily, and all their Entertainments have no more reliſh than abortive Fruit, which can never be ripened into Sweetneſs or Beauty. When I have obſerved any one thus waſting away a whole Life, without ever being once well awake in it, paſſing through the World like a heedleſs Traveller, without making any Reflections or Obſervations, without any Deſign or Purpoſe beſeeming a Man; Ah! thought I, is this that Creature for which this great Theatre the World was made; for which it was ſo adorned and ſo enriched? Is this the Creature that is the Epitome of the World, the top and glory of the viſible Creation, a little inferiour

to

to Angels, and allied to God? Is this Machine acted by a moving Flame, and by a wise and immortal Spirit? Ah! how much is this poor useless stupid thing sunk beneath the Dignity and Design of its Nature! How far short is it fall'n of the Glory to which God had destined it! Shall this contemptible thing ever be admitted to Eternal Life, who has so wretchedly fooled away this Temporal one? Or can Crowns and Kingdoms be reserved for one who has been so ill a Steward of all these Talents God has committed to him? No surely, I could upon the first thought imagine his sluggish Soul would vanish like those of Brutes, or, as the *Stoicks* fancy, those of Fools; I could easily imagine that it could sleep, not as some fancy all Souls do, to the Resurrection, but to all Eternity. But upon better consideration, I find this ignorant and incogitant Life, is not so innocent as to deserve no worse a Fate: For is it a small Crime to live barren and unfruitful, endowed with so many Talents? To frustrate the Design of our Creation? To choak and stifle all the Seed of a Divine Life and Perfection? To quench the Grace and Spirit of God?

In

In a word, Is it a ſmall Crime to be falſe and perfidious to God, unjuſt and injurious to Man? No, it cannot be; and therefore in the Parable of our Saviour, wherein the laſt Audit or Day of Accompts is repreſented, the ſlothful and wicked Servant ſignifie one and the ſame Thing, and muſt undergo one and the ſame Sentence.

Secondly, *Life* cannot conſiſt in Senſuality, that is, in the meer careſſing our Senſes, or the gratification of our Carnal Appetites. The Reaſons of this Aſſertion are evident from the general Notion of Life. For firſt, This is not the Exerciſe of the whole Nature, but a part of it, and that the Inferiour and Ignobler too. Secondly, It is not an Imployment ſuitable to the Dignity of our Nature.

Firſt, Senſuality employs only the meaner Part of us; St. *Paul* makes mention of the outward and the inward Man, and ſeems to make up the whole Man of Spirit, Soul, and Body; and ſome both Divines and Philoſophers of no ſmall Note, both Modern and Ancient, have taught that there are two diſtinct Souls in Man, a Senſitive and a Rational

Rational one; if this be ſo, the Senſualiſt, though he ſeem fond of Life, does fooliſhly contemn the better half of it; and as much a Slave to Pleaſure as he is, he chuſes to drink only the Dregs, and lets the pure Streams of ſprightly and delicious Life paſs by untaſted; for if there be a Senſitive and Rational Soul, there muſt be a Senſitive and a Rational Life too, diſtinct and different from one another, and one as much elevated above the other, as are the Principals they flow from. But whether this be ſo or no, does not import much; for it is plain, that Life, whatever it be, is like Seed, which, according to the different Soyl it is ſown in, produces Fruit more or leſs rich and ſucculent, more or leſs luſcious and beautiful; here it ſprouts forth like the ſeven poor and lean, there like the ſeven plump and rich Eares of Corn in *Pharaoh*'s Dream; and ſhould it by way of fiction be ſuppoſed, that one and the ſame Soul did communicate Life to Men, Beaſts, and Vegetables; however, Life in each would be equal in the dignity of its Orignal, it would vaſtly differ in its Effects and Operations; ſo whether Life

in Man flow from one or two distinct Principles, it is evident that its Price and Dignity varies according to the different Powers and Faculties which it moves and animates, and by consequence that Life which displays it self in the acts of our Rational Part, will be as different from that which consists in Sensation, and the Motions of Bodily Appetites, as is the Light that glitters in a Diamond, from that which faintly imitates it in a Pebble; the more numerous and the more exquisite our Faculties, the vaster is the Empire of Life, and the more delicate and charming all its Functions and Operations; How evident is this in all the Organs and Senses of the Body? Let Darkness invade the Eye, and Deafness the Ear, and then within what narrow and scanty Bounds is the Bodily Life reduced? How few and ignoble are the Vital Acts and Operations of the Body? How vile and contemptible are all the Fruits or Instances of a sensitive Life? If then there be no sense or Organ of the Body superfluous, can we think the rational Soul it self can be so? If there be no Power, no Cappacity of a sensitive Soul, by which Life is not enlarged

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or enriched, muſt we not needs conclude, That to extinguiſh the Immortal Spirit within us, and as it were, to diſcard all its Powers and Faculties, muſt needs be to impoveriſh, mutilate, and ſtifle it; ſince I have a Soul as well as Body, ſince the one is as capable of converſing with God and Heaven, with Truth and Moral Goodneſs and Perfection, as the other is of converſing with this World of viſible Objects, I cannot but conclude, That to be deſtitute of Knowledge and Faith, of Hope and Love, is more injurious to the true Life of Man, than to be Deaf or Blind; That Stupidity or Lethargy in the Soul, ſuch as renders it altogether incapable of rational Pleaſure, is as inconſiſtent with the true Life of Man, as Lethargy or a dead Palſie in the Body can be; and to be excluded from Commerce with the inviſible World, is as fatal to it, as to be debarred the viſible one. From all this 'tis evident, that whether we conſider Life with reſpect to its Excellence and Dignity, or to its Enlargment and Extenſion, Senſuality is extreamly injurious to it in both reſpects; ſo far doth it debaſe and contract it, that I may boldly

conclude, to place Life in Senſuality, is to renounce the much more valuable and delightful part of it, to baniſh our ſelves the much better World, and to rob our ſelves of a thouſand Joys and Pleaſures which we might reap from the rational Powers and Faculties, that is, the nobleſt Capacities and Endowments of our Nature. Though this be abundantly enough to evince, that Life conſiſts not in Senſuality, yet this being of the higheſt Importance to Humane Happineſs, I will proceed to the ſecond Argument againſt it, that is,

Secondly, It is not conſonant to the Dignity of Humane Nature, or, which is all one, to the Deſign of our Beings, conſpicuous in our Frame and Conſtitution. Who, that ever conſidered what Senſuality was, how narrow the extent of Senſe, how mean and brutiſh the Pleaſure that terminates in it, what a Corruption and Degeneracy it ends in, who, I ſay, that has ever conſidered theſe, and a thoſand things more, can believe that Senſuality is an Employment worthy of a Man? Is this the Buſineſs of a vaſt and comprehenſive mind? Is this conſiſtent with ambitious Deſires

of

of Immortality, with unquenchable Thirſt of Truth, with a Capacity of diſcovering Spiritual Excellencies, and Moral Beauties, and Perfections? Was it for this we were endowed with Propenſions to Worſhip and Adore a Deity? What can be as much as fancied, the uſe of Wiſdom, Magnanimity, Conſcience, Sagacity, Caution, Fear, Foreſight, and anxious Enquiries into future Things and Times, if Senſuality had been the only Employment deſign'd Man? How much more fit had we been form'd for this end, if there had been in us no Reaſon to check and controul us, no Conſcience that could fill us with regret for the paſt, or fear for the future; no Wiſdom that could teach us, that there were any thing above us, nor greatneſs of Mind, that could reproach us for ſtooping to any thing below us?

Thirdly, 'Tis almoſt ſuperfluous here to add, That Life conſiſts not in *Worldlineſs* or *Deviliſhneſs*; as to the former of theſe, by which I mean the Cares and Purſuits of the World, 'tis plain, that to employ our time and Faculties in this alone, is not to live, but at beſt to provide for Life. Neceſſity may

ſometimes ſubject us to the drudgery and ſlavery of the World, but a voluntary Choice never ſhould. I know no other difference between a mean Fortune and a great one, than this; That the great one ſets a Man above thoſe Cares and Toils, which the mean one forces him to ſubmit to; That the one puts the fortunate Man into the immediate poſſeſſion of all the Means and Inſtruments of Life, Improvement and Fruition, and of Leaſure and Opportunity to make uſe of them; but the latter obliges the leſs fortunate Man to purchaſe theſe Advantages with Toil and Sweat, Sollicitude and Care: 'Tis therefore an unpardonable wilfulneſs or blindneſs, whenever that Vaſſalage, which is the Infelicity of the mean Man, is the choice of the rich and fortunate one: Nor is it a more pardonable Error in any, who continue the Drudgery and Care when the Neceſſity is over, and voluntarily ſuffer all the Diſadvantages of a narrow Fortune, even when they have attained to a plentiful one; who never think it time to begin to Live, or to enjoy the Succeſs of their Cares and Diligence; this is an Abſurdity as groſs as his, who after he has plowed and ſowed,

ed, ſhould refuſe to reap; or his, who having, with much coſt and labour, furniſhed out a plentiful Table, ſhould not at length find in his heart to fall to and eat.

Life then conſiſts not in the abundance of the things which a Man poſſeſſes, much leſs in the Vexation or Toil of acquiring, ſecuring, or increaſing them, which is that I intend by *Worldlineſs*; but leſt of all can Life conſiſt in *Deviliſhneſs*, that is, Wrath, Strife, Revenge, Pride, and ſuch like; this cannot be called the Vigour and Activity, but Storm and Agony of our Nature; this is a ſtate wherein the Underſtanding is covered with a Darkneſs of Hell, that is, Ignorance of Good and Evil; and the Paſſions are but Furies unchained, and let looſe.

Fourthly, Having thus, by reſolving particularly concerning Life, that it conſiſts not either in *Sloth* or *Senſuality*, *Worldlineſs* or *Deviliſhneſs*, pointed out thoſe fatal Errors which miſlead and ſeduce Men from the Paths of Peace and Happineſs; 'tis now time to ſhew in the laſt place, what it is, wherein Life does more immediately and particularly conſiſt; that is, *in a vigorous and active*

Employment of the whole Man, according to the Rules and Dictates of right Reaſon. When I make Reaſon the Director and Guide of Humane Life, when I conſtitute it Dictator over all the Powers and Paſſions of Man, I do no more mean to exclude the Aid of Revelation, and the Spirit of God, than when I affirm the Eye to be the Guide of the Body, I intend to deny the neceſſity of Light to good Eyes, or of Spectacles and Collyriums to dim or diſturbed ones. The Propoſition thus guarded, will appear indiſputable to any who ſhall conſider the Frame and Make of Man. That we are Rational Creatures, is a Truth never hitherto controverted; and that Reaſon is the Soveraign Faculty in us, appears from the Univerſal Appeal of all Sides and all Sects to its Tribunal. Not the Virtuous and Wiſe only, but the Looſe and the Vicious plead the Authority of Reaſon in defence of their Choice and Actions; and in all the numberleſs Diſputes that are in the World, though only one ſide can have the Warrant and Countenance of Reaſon, yet all do pretend to it; ſo that though there be no Power or Authority which in reality is more

more frequently oppoſed and violated, there is alſo none which is more unanimouſly owned, and univerſally acknowledged: As therefore it is plain, from what has been diſcourſed before, That Life conſiſts not in Vital Powers and Faculties, but in the Exerciſe and Employment of them; ſo is it as plain, that in this we are not to follow the Conduct of Fancy and Imagination, of Luſt and Paſſion, but of Reaſon? This is the right uſe of our Natural Gifts, which diſtinguiſhes Man from Beaſts, and Men from one another; The Hero from the Caitiff and Villain, the Philoſopher from the Fool, and the Saint from the Sinner: In this conſiſts the Order and Dignity of Humane Nature, in this the Beauty and Tranquillity of Humane Life; and in this the inward Joy and Peace of the Mind of Man. This will be yet more manifeſt to whoſoever will take the pains to enquire what the Office of Reaſon is; 'Tis this which teaches us what Rank we hold among the Creatures of God, what Station we fill in the World, what our Relations and Dependencies are, what the Duty and what the Hopes, what the Benefit and what the Pleaſure

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that reſult from each: 'Tis this which preſcribes all our Powers and Paſſions, their Order, Place, and Work; 'Tis this which diſtinguiſhes Truth and Falſhood, Good and Evil; 'Tis this which fills us with the Knowledge, and enflames us with the Love of our Sovereign Happineſs, and judges of the Means and Ways that lead to it; and finally, 'tis this which teaches us to ſet a true rate and value upon all inferiour things, in proportion to their tendency, either to promote or obſtruct our Sovereign Good. Happy therefore is that Life where Reaſon is the Sovereign Arbitrator of all our Actions, and where the Imagination and Paſſions, all the Powers of the Soul, are yet Servants and Inſtruments of Reaſon: Happy this Life, for it can nither want Pleaſure to entertain it, nor Buſineſs to employ it: Happy the Soul which thus lives, for it ſhall never want Comfort to ſupport it, Hopes to encourage it, nor Crowns to reward it; for as it grows in Wiſdom and Goodneſs, ſo muſt it in Favour with God and Man; and its Peace and Tranquility, its Joys and Expectations muſt receive a proportionable Increaſe too.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Inferences drawn from the former Chapter. First, *To cultivate our Reason. The Uſe of which is more particularly inſiſted on with reſpect to three thing, that is, the employing our Faculties, the bearing Evil, and enjoying Good.* Secondly, *To renounce every thing that oppoſes it, as Fancy, Paſſion, Example, Cuſtom.* Thirdly, *That 'tis poſſible to be happy in every State.* Fourthly, *That a long Life is a great Bleſſing, conſidered either in it ſelf, or with reſpect to the Life to come.*

FRom the Notion of Life thus ſtated, 'tis evident, *Firſt*, That our Buſineſs is to Cultivate and Improve Reaſon; for this, as you have ſeen, is to be the Guide and Superintendent of all our Powers and Faculties, and the Arbiter and Judge of all our Actions; *If the light that is in you, be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs?* Matth. 6. 23. Vigour and Activity, if Reaſon do not ſteer them, will but prove miſchievous and fatal to us; Diligence and Induſtry themſelves will only ſerve to corrupt our Nature, and embroyl

embroyl our Life; every deviation from Reaſon, is a deviation from our True Perfection and Happineſs; The Fool and the Sinner do, in the Language of the Scripture, ſignifie the ſame thing, and ſo do Sin and Miſery. This is the true Original of all thoſe Miſchiefs which infeſt the World, the neglect or contempt of right Reaſon; 'Tis this which makes our Complaints ſo numerous, and ſo bitter; 'Tis this that makes us ſo weak and ſoft in Adverſity, ſo reſtleſs and little ſatisfied even in Proſperity it ſelf; 'Tis this creates all thoſe Diſaſters and Diſappointments which make us often quarrel at Providence, and curſe our Fortune; *The folly of Man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth againſt God*, Prov. 19. 3. Well therefore did the Wiſeman adviſe, *Prov.* 4. 7. *Wiſdom is the principal thing, therefore get Wiſdom; and with all thy getting, get Underſtanding.* The Neceſſity of this does eaſily appear from the ſlighteſt Reflection upon the Work or Office of Reaſon, of which I have given a brief and general Account before, much more from the uſe of it, in Three great Points; The Employing our Faculties, the Enjoyment of Good, and the Bearing Evil. *Firſt*,

Firſt, The Employing, *&c.* The Soul of Man like a fertil Field, ſeems alike apt to produce either Herbs or Weeds; the Faculties of it are capable of being the Inſtruments of the greateſt Evil or the greateſt Good; the greateſt Good, if regulated and conducted by Reaſon; the greateſt Evil, if blindly and raſhly led by any other Principle. What is the Imagination of a Fool, but a Shop of Toys and Trinkets, not the Laboratory of a Philoſopher, where a thouſand vain triflings and empty Ideas flutter confuſedly up and down; What his Memory, but a Receptacle and Sink of Sins and Follies, of mean and ſhameful Things and Actions, not a Treaſury of excellent Truths, laid up like Ammunition and Proviſion for time both of Peace and War? What his Heart, but the Rendezvous of a thouſand mutinous, violent, and diſhonourable Luſts, which rend and tear him, worſe than the Devil in the Goſpel the Man poſſeſſed? Nay, what is even Fancy and Wit it ſelf, if diſtitute of ſound Judgment and true Reaſon, but I know not what ſort of flaſhes, which dazle, but do not guide; ſerve for amuzement, rather than nouriſh-

riſhment or Delight? And therefore the Author is very well paid, if he be praiſed and ſtarved, which is generally his Fate. In a word, neither Buſineſs nor Diverſion can have in them any thing truly uſeful or truly pleaſing, if they be not regulated and conducted by right Reaſon; and all the Diſpoſitions and Faculties of our Nature will be, but either loſt upon Fooleries, or abuſed to our Ruine.

Secondly, The uſe of Reaſon is conſpicuous in the Fruition of Good. Knowledge is like Light ſhed upon the Face of the World, which diſcovers all its various Beauties and wondrous Wealth; which, while Darkneſs covered them, were as though they had not been. Without Reaſon we ſhall not be able to diſcern nor value our own Happineſs, not be ſenſible of our Bleſſings and Goods, even though they croud and throng upon us; without this, our very Enjoyments will prove Fatal to our Repoſe, and we ſhall meet Gall and Wormwood in the bottom of our Draughts of Pleaſure: *For the turning away of the Simple ſhall ſlay them, and the proſperity of Fools ſhall deſtroy them.* Pro. 1. 32. It requires

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no ſmall Philoſophy, either to render Buſineſs pleaſant, or Pleaſure innocent; neither to diſcharge thoſe Duties which a great Birth or eminent Station call Men to, or to employ that time which an ample Fortune makes them entirely Maſters of; and to Husband a Life of Eaſe and Enjoyment to the beſt, and fill it with Vertue and Honour. Ah! how often have I ſeen the vigour of Nature diſſolved by Pleaſure, the edge and fineneſs of its parts blunted by Sloth and Softneſs? How often have I ſeen Men rendred mean and contemptible by Succeſs and Proſperity, for which they were not big enough! whereas had the Mind been well cultivated and enriched with true Wiſdom, Pleaſure and Diverſion themſelves had refined and recruited Nature; and Power, Honour, and Plenty, had only placed Worth and greatneſs in a better light; this is true in its proportion from the loweſt to the higheſt Station; it requires Senſe and Reaſon to govern and enjoy Proſperity; an obſcure and narrow Fortune is moſt convenient both to conceal and preſerve a Fool; for Plenty and Power, Dignity and Preferment, do but expoſe him to Scorn and Danger,

Danger, and it were well if the poor Creature could periſh or ſuffer alone; but the Miſchief is, like a falſe and ſandy Foundation, overthrows the Deſigns and Intereſts that are built upon him, and miſerably betrays the confidence repoſed in him: But how great ſoever the uſe of Reaſon be, as to the Goods, it is no leſs in relation to the Evils of this World; for,

Thirdly, Reaſon is the Pilot of Humane Life, and ſteers it ſteddily through wild and tempeſtuous Seas, amidſt the Rocks and Shelves of Luſt and Fancy, Fortune and Folly, Ignorance, Error and a thouſand Cheats and Impoſtures: 'Tis this alone that enables Man to deſpiſe imaginary Evils, and vanquiſh real ones; it arms the Mind with true and laſting Magnanimity, furniſhes it with ſolid Comfors, and teaches it to extract Life and Health, Vertue and Wiſdom, out of the madneſs and mutability of Men and Fortune, like Antidotes and Cordials out of things poiſonous and baneful in themſelves. It is not now to be wondred at, after this Account, how imperfect ſoever it be, of the uſe of Reaſon (which ſufficiently ſhews how eſſential it is to the Being,

Being, the Ornament and Felicity of Humane Life) if I have reſolved it to be the great Buſineſs of Man to improve and cultivate it, ſurely all the great Men of the World, and all the inſpired ones, have been of my Opinion; for their chief, if not only Deſign, ever was, either to obtain Wiſdom themſelves, or to propagate it amongſt others; and 'tis evident, that God himſelf has ever carried on this one Deſign of advancing Wiſdom amongſt the Sons of Men; this is the pre-eminence of His Law above thoſe of Men, that theſe reſtrain the Actions, but thoſe enlighten the Mind; theſe puniſh Offences and Crimes, but thoſe by informing the Judgment, and ſtrengthening the Reaſon of Man, prevent the commiſſion of them, and direct and inſtigate him to the practice of Vertue. This then is the great Work that God and Man invite us to, That we ſhould make daily progreſs and proficiency in Knowledge and Underſtanding; *That we ſhould encline our ears to wiſdom, and apply our hearts to underſtanding*; *That we ſhall ſeek her as ſilver, and ſearch for her as for hid treaſures:* And this is that which our Nature and State invite us

to, for our Perfection and our Pleaſure, our Succeſs and our Security, our Repoſe and Tranquillity, and in one word, our true Happineſs depends upon it.

Secondly, It eaſily follows from the right Notion of Life, that we are to bid open Defiance to all thoſe things which directly oppoſe, or ſecretly undermine the Authority of Reaſon, or any way obſtruct the free Exerciſe of its Power and Sovereignty; for 'tis to no purpoſe to travail and labour to advance Reaſon, if afterwards we refuſe to be governed and conducted by it: Reaſon, if we do not live by it, will ſerve only to increaſe our Shame and Guilt. St. *Peter* thinks *it better never to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than after the knowledge of it to turn from the holy Commandments delivered unto us*, 2 Pet. 2. 21. To ſtifle the Sparks of Reaſon by Negligence and Sloth, to choak the Seeds of Wiſdom and Perfection by a lazy and vicious Education, is a great Crime; but to deſert and betray our Reaſon, grown up to ſome maturity, to hold it in captivity and fetters, to defile and proſtitute it, by compelling it to ſerve and flatter abominable Paſſions; this ſure muſt be a far greater

greater degree of Wickedneſs and Prophaneneſs, and conſequently muſt needs expoſe the Man to the Scorn or Pity of the wiſe and rational part of Mankind, to the Reproaches and Confuſion of his own Conſcience, and to the Wrath and Indignation of God: Or if none of theſe Miſchiefs ſhould attend the Contempt and Prophanation of Knowledge, yet there is one more of it ſelf ſufficient to make Man miſerable; it precipitates him into all the Irregularities and Wildneſſes imaginable, nothing being ſo inſolent and ungovernable, ſo ſavage and untameable as thoſe Paſſions which are accuſtomed to over-power and maſter Reaſon. 'Tis from all this manifeſt, That whoever loves Life, and would experience it a real Bleſſing, muſt with all his power ſet himſelf to remove and defeat whatever may hinder his ready and entire Submiſſion to the Dictates of Reaſan. Now the things which enfeeble the ſtrength of our Reaſon, and baffle its authority, are ſuch as theſe, *Fancy*, *Paſſion*, *Example*, *Cuſtom*; theſe we muſt ever combat, till we have reduced them within their Bounds: Fancy ſurprizes, Paſſion over-powers, Cuſtom and Example betray our Reaſon; we muſt

therefore always oppoſe the giddineſs of Fancy, and the violence of Paſſion, and guard our Minds againſt the inſinuation of Cuſtom and Example; and to do this well, to do it ſucceſsfully, is of greater importance than any work of our Secular Calling, than any attendance upon Trade, or a Temporal Intereſt; this can only make us great, but that will make us wiſe; this can make us rich, but that will make us happy; this therefore muſt be the next great Buſineſs of Life, to aſſert the Majeſty and Sovereignty of Reaſon, and never ſuffer it to be held captive and enthralled by any vicious Principle, or impotent Luſt: Happy the Man who ſucceeds in this! his Sincerity ſhall be to him as good as Infallibility; his Conſcience ſhall never reproach him, nor God condemn him; and tho' he may not always hit the next way, he ſhall never wholly miſs the right way to *Happineſs*: Therefore from this Notion of Life,

Thirdly, We may infer the poſſibility of *Humane Happineſs* in every ſtate; for ſince to Live, is but to act regularly, to uſe and employ our Powers and Faculties rationally; and ſince Life, Perfection, and Fruition, are one and the ſame

thing,

thing, or elſe inſeparably and intimately united, it is evident that no Circumſtances can deſtroy our Happineſs, unleſs they deſtroy our Reaſon; no Condition can render us miſerable, but that which can render it impoſſible for us to act rationally; that which obſtructs our attainment of Knowledge, or our liberty of Acting conformable to it. But what Circumſtances can theſe be? What Condition can we fancy, wherein it ſhall be impoſſible for a Chriſtian to know his Sovereign Good, and purſue it, to learn his Duty, and to practiſe it? wherein it ſhall be impoſſible for him to ſearch and contemplate Truth, to love and follow after Righteouſneſs and Goodneſs, and to be meek and humbe, modeſt and magnanimous, juſt and charitable, pure and devout? wherein, in one word, it ſhall be impoſſible for him to live by Faith, or, which is the ſame thing in my ſenſe, by Reaſon. *Solomon* long ſince obſerved, *That wiſdom uttered her voice in the ſtreets, and in the meetings of the highways.* This is more eminently true now, ſince the Reaſon of Mankind has been refined and defæcated by Revelation, and true Philoſophy has been diffuſed and publiſhed

liſted through the World; the Fountains of Truth and Wiſdom lie open to all who thirſt after them, and God no more denies any his Grace than his Revelation. All which being ſo, 'tis evident, that as God has put it in the Power of every Man to act rationally, ſo has he put it in every Man's Power to be happy; that *Humane Happineſs* is not precarious, or dependant on Fortune, but our ſelves; for Life conſiſts not in the abundance of things which a Man poſſeſſes, but in the right uſe of them; and *better is a poor and wiſe Child, than an old and fooliſh King*, Eccl. 4. 13. For the good eſtate of the Mind conſiſts not in foreign, but domeſtick Poſſeſſions; not in the Riches of Fortune, but of Grace and Vertue; and Fruition cannot conſiſt, either in the abuſe of temporal Things, or the depravation of our Nature, but in the true cultivation and improvement of the one, and the right uſe of the other.

Fourthly, From hence, laſtly, it eaſily appears on what account length of Days is a great Bleſſing, whether conſidered in *it ſelf*, or with *reſpect* to a future Life. Firſt, in it ſelf; If Life did conſiſt in earthineſs, that is, the ſcraping and raking together

together Sums of Money, 'tis plain that Life muſt ebb and flow with our Fortune; and whenever the Revolutions of Times, or Trades, ſhould put a ſtop to the career of our Succeſs, and give a check to all our further Hopes and Projects, we ſhould have nothing elſe to do but to break off the Thread of Life; for what uſe could we make of the remains of our miſerable Days! Or if Life did conſiſt in Senſuality, we ſhould have little reaſon to deſire to ſurvive our Youth and Strength, and length of Days would be rather a Burden than a Bleſſing; for we ſhould ſoon out-live our Pleaſures, and ſhrink and wither into dull, impotent, and contemptible things. But if my Notion of Life be true, the Pleaſures and Joys of it muſt increaſe and multiply with our Years, ſince Reaſon ought day by day to advance to a more perfect Maturity, and more abſolute Authority: *With the ancient is wiſdom, and in length of days underſtanding*, Job 12. 12. *And the paths of the righteous are like the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more to the perfect day.* A thorough Experience of the emptineſs and uncertainty of this World, with a longer and more intimate acquaintance with another,

ſhould poſſeſs the Soul of this Man with a Magnanimity that nothing could ſhake, with a Tranquillity that nothing could diſturb: The Cuſtom of doing good, together with the Peace and Delight that ſpring from the Reflections on it, ſhould make the Current of his Actions run ſmooth and calm; his Obſervations on the Changes and Turns of Humane Affairs, the Riſe and Declenſion of Parties and Cauſes, the ſecret Springs and Wheels of the Paſſions of the Mind of Man, together with all the various Arts of managing them, do fill him with a ſort of a Divine Foreknowledge, and entertain him with a wondrous Proſpect: And how happy muſt this Man be in himſelf! And how much honoured and revered by others! Conſulted as an Oracle, propoſed as an Original of Goodneſs, the abſolute Maſter of this World, and the immediate Heir of another! Which is the ſecond Thing.

Secondly, This is the only Notion of Life, which can render it a Bleſſing in reference to its influence upon another; none but rational Pleaſures, which are the Antepaſt of Heaven, can enkindle our Thirſt, or qualifie us for the Enjoyment

ment of thoſe above; nothing but the wiſe and rational Employment of our Faculties can prepare us for a Heaven, or entitle us to it. Nay further, if Life had not this influence upon another World, length of days would be an Injury, not Advantage to us; it would only keep us from our Heaven, delay and put off our Happineſs: But now, when according to this Notion of Life, every Act of Life does perfect our Nature, enlarge our Capacity, and increaſe our Appetite of Glory; when every Day that is added to Life, by the production of ſome new Fruit, does add new Stars to our Crowns of Righteouſneſs, and new Treaſures to our heavenly Inheritance; it is evident, that a long Life is a great Bleſſing, not only on its own account, but alſo of that Life which we expect hereafter. Bleſſed God! how conſpicuous is thy Goodneſs in this whole Contrivance! How cloſely and inſeparably haſt thou united Vertue and Happineſs! And how natural is the aſcent from a rational Life here, to a glorious Life hereafter!

SECT.

SECT. II.

Of the different Kinds of Life.

THey who handle Morals nicely and abſtractedly, ſeem to me to forget the Nature of their Subject, which requires to be handled after its own way, that is, practically, and, if I might ſo ſay, groſly and corporeally; for the Mixture and Variety, the Complication and Confuſion, the Mutability and Inconſtancy of Human Affairs and Actions, which are the Matter of Morals, are not ſubject to Rules of Art and ſpeculative Exactneſs: And therefore, tho' I will follow the received Diviſion of Life into Active and Contemplative, as ſquaring exactly with my Notion of it, yet I would not be underſtood to deſign under theſe Heads, to treat of all the various Kinds or States of Life; I touch not the Military, the Sacerdotal, the Scholaſtick Life, nor do I here uſe the Words *Active* and *Contemplative* ſtrictly and nicely; but by the firſt I underſtand any ſort of publick Life, and any ſort of private one by the laſt; nor do I much concern my ſelf, whether the Life

Life of a Trader or Artiſan be logically reducible under the one or the other; or whether it ought to conſtitute a diſtinct and particular kind of Life by it ſelf; but accommodating my ſelf to the nature of Things, and purſuing my own Deſign, without any ſcrupulous regard to Words or Forms, I will diſcourſe, *firſt*, of a Civil, *ſecondly*, of a Trading and Negociating, and, *thirdly*, of a Private and Retired Life. Having *firſt*, in a Preliminary Chapter ſaid ſomething in general of the difference of an Active and Contemplative Life, and the Reaſons, or Grounds, which ought to prevail and determine Man in his Election of the one or the other.

CHAP. I.

The Conveniencies and the Inconveniencies of the Active and Contemplative Life. The Active more neceſſary. The ſeveral Grounds on which Men determine their Choice, that is, Intereſt, Providence, Inclination, &c.

THE Felicity, or Infelicity, of Man, depending not a little upon the Choice he makes of his Courſe of Life, it is

is worth the conſidering, which of theſe two Kinds, the Active or Contemplative, is to be preferred. If they be compared in themſelves, the Active ſeems to have more in it of Glory, but alſo more of Hazard; it ſeems more ſerviceable to others, but not ſo eaſie to a Man's ſelf: He therefore that would render each State perfect, and remove the Inconveniences of each, muſt ſtudy how to relieve the toil, and obviate the hazard of the Active, and to prevent the barrenneſs and inglorioufneſs of the Contemplative Life.

But which ſoever of theſe two be the more excellent in it ſelf, 'tis certain the Active Life is the more neceſſary and indiſpenſible to the Well-being of Humane Society. Such is the Nature of Mankind, that being liable to various Neceſſities, it requires the various Relief of manifold Aſſiſtances, to which every Man is bound to contribute his ſhare: We have Minds that muſt be cultivated, Bodies that muſt be provided for. The State either of War or Peace hath its ſeveral Wants, all which call for ſeveral Arts to wage the one, and enrich and adorn the other; without theſe, we ſhould find no Defence in War, nor Pleaſure in Peace;

Peace; without theſe, Humane Life would grow wild and ſavage, and Humane Nature would be uncultivated and unſociable; without theſe, our Houſes had ſtill been Caves and Grots, our Food Acorns and Water, our Clothing the Spoils of Beaſts: Finally, without theſe, the ſpeculative Man would ſoon ſuffer thoſe Neceſſities, which would convince him that he lived in a World, and in a Body, which requir'd more at his hands than meer muſing and thinking, and would ſoon force him to give over his Speculations, for the more neceſſary Enquiries of Food and Rayment: Or if he could be content with that Proviſion which Nature, unaided by Art and Induſtry, would yield him and the Beaſts of the Field, yet would he not be able to promiſe himſelf the continuance of this mighty Bleſſing: Without Laws and Arms, the undiſciplin'd Rabble would diſturb his Muſings, Avarice and Violence would invade his Walk, and drive him from his little Cottage and Brook, where he had choſe his Retreat. For theſe, and a great many other Reaſons, the World hath enrolled the Authors and Inventors of Laws and Arts amongſt their Gods, and has gratefully recorded the Memories of

of all ſuch as have any way contributed to the Conveniencies or Ornaments of Humane Life, as the Benefactors of Mankind: And Holy Writ it ſelf has not been wanting to do Honour to all ſuch; for it has regiſtred the Names of ſuch as have excell'd in any thing beneficial to the Publick.

But however this be, whatever be the Excellence and Advantage of an Active above a Contemplative Life, either conſidered in it ſelf, or with reſpect to its ſerviceableneſs and uſefulneſs to the World, 'tis certain that Men, generally ſpeaking, are not determined to the one or to the other, by theſe Conſiderations, but by ſuch particular Circumſtances as often render that which is leſs excellent in it ſelf, more fit and proper for them; thus ſometimes Education trains Men up (ſhall I ſay) or condemns them to a particular kind of Life, and the choice of others prevents the liberty of our own; ſometimes the ſolicitation of Friends carries us againſt the very bent and inclination of Nature, and ſometimes a lucky and unexpected Providence frees us from the trouble of perplexed Deliberation, and leads us on in methods which Humane

mane Prudence could not have contriv'd; but moſt commonly of all, we take counſel from the nature of our State, and the neceſſities of our Fortune; how much is to be deferred to each of theſe, is a matter not eaſie to be decided: Againſt Neceſſity we cannot diſpute; againſt the Invitations of Providence we ought not, if we have but good proofs of the one or the other. But 'tis too too often, that weakneſs of Judgment or Courage makes us call that Neceſſity which is not; and the flattery of our Hopes makes us interpret our Dreames or Fancies divine Auguries or Preſages. As to Friends and Intereſt, I confeſs, with the Ingenious Sir *Henry Wotton*, That an expert Man does more eaſily get up into the Saddle by the help of a Stirrup, than a much ſtronger by meer force; yet it ought to be conſidered, that the Man who is unequal to the Deſigns of his Friends, renders their Patronage very difficult, but his own Life more. As to the bent or inclination of Nature, ſo mutable are the Tempers, or at leaſt the Fancies of Mankind, that this is a Diſcovery not ſoon to be preſumed upon, or elſe I ſhould as ſoon adviſe to give up one's ſelf to this, as to any other Guide.

Guide. The truth is, the trueſt Meaſures in this Enquiry, are to be taken from a thorough Knowledge of our ſelves, and of the different Courſes of Life about which we deliberate: But alas! they are but few whom a propitious Providence has left at liberty to enter into this Deliberation, and fewer that are capable of forming a true Reſolution upon it: I am ſure there is no Enquiry of Humane Life, wherein there is more need of an infallible Guide; and therefore I would counſel the young to conſult God in the firſt place, and next the moſt ſage and experienced they can find out; for they ſtand in a place where many ways meet, and if they take the wrong, they will certainly wander far, and it may be never recover the right. And as to others, who have ſtruggled long againſt Wind and Tide, who have floted long upon the Billows of vulgar Errors of their own private Luſts and Fancies, they will be happy, I think, if after long Experience of their Folly, they make with all ſpeed for Land, and take the firſt Harbour where they can ride in ſafety.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the Civil Life, or the Active Life of a Gentleman.

Sect. 1. *The Gentleman's Obligations to an Active Life, from the conſideration of what he owes to God, to his Country, to himſelf. The Active Life not injurious to the Gentleman's Pre-eminence, Liberty, Pleaſure.* Sect. 2. *The regulation of the Civil Life,* i. e. *the Knowledge and Vertues neceſſary to this ſort of Life. The Conſtancy required throughout the whole Courſe of the Gentleman's Life. Some Vacations from Buſineſs neceſſary, and to what ends.*

BEfore I go about to ſet down thoſe Rules which may render Men of Rank and Fortune, belov'd, eminent, and happy in their Station, I think it neceſſary to convince ſuch of the Obligations they lie under to be ſome way or other uſeful and ſerviceable to the World; for 'tis in vain to talk of the Knowledge and Virtue neceſſary to ſupport and adorn a Civil Life, to ſuch as perſwade themſelves that they are born only to follow

their own Humour and Fancy; and that it is the Perogative of their Birth and Fortune, to be idle, ignorant, and looſe.

Sect. 1. This then is the Firſt thing I would fain make Gentlemen ſenſible of, that they cannot, without impardonable Guilt and Reproach, waſte and fool away their Life and Fortune; and I think this would not be very hard to effect, if they would pleaſe to make but a very ſlight Reflection upon the Arguments I here addreſs to them. You owe more to God, and to your Country, not to add to your ſelves, tho' that be true too in a proper ſenſe, than any others do. To God—to his Providence you owe it, that you were born to thoſe Fortunes which others toil for; that you are the Maſters of that Time, which others are forc'd to devote to their Wants and Neceſſities, and that you are placed at firſt in thoſe advantageous heights which others climb to by ſlow and tedious ſteps; your Guilt therefore is greater than the mean Man is capable of, while you invade the Honour of that God, from whom alone you derive yours; while *you* dethrone *Him* who has rais'd *you*, and employ all your Power and Treaſure againſt that being from whom you

you received them; no Ingratitude, no Treachery or Baſeneſs like that of a Favourite and Confident. And as you owe to God, ſo do you to your Country, more than other Men; you are they who ſhould be the Support and Ornament of it; you are placed in higher Orbs, not that like Meteors, your ominous blaze ſhould be the gaze and terror of the Multitude, but that like Stars you might lighten and beautifie, animate and impregnate the inferior World; for you, like them, ſhould have an inlarged Proſpect, a ſwift and conſtant Motion, a bountiful and benign Influence: If your Vertues do not more diſtinguiſh you from the Crowd than your Fortunes, you are expoſed, not honoured, by the eminence of your Station, and you debauch and betray your poor Country by your Sin and Folly, which your Example, your Wiſdom, your Courage, and your Bouuty, with all thoſe other great Vertues which Perſons of your Rank ſhould ſhine with, ſhould protect and enrich, and raiſe to the higheſt Reputation of Vertue and Power. Miſerable muſt that Kingdom be, whoſe rich and great Ones, are as much more impudently Wicked, as they are more fortu-

nate than other Men; when they, whoſe Example ſhould awe the Vitious, contribute not a little to corrupt the Virtuous part of it, and to debauch the very Genius and Spirit of the Nation: When they, who ſhould be the Patriots of their Country, inſtead of being Men of Travel and Reading, of Abilities and Experience, of Honour and Activity, are verſed only in Eſſences and Perukes, Game-houſes and Stews, and have ſo far loſt the Qualities of a Gentleman, that they are meaner, falſer, and cowardlier than the loweſt of the People; thoſe muſt indeed be ſtrange *Courts*, *Counſels*, *Parliaments*, *Armies*, which are filled and influenced by ſuch as theſe; that muſt be a wretched State where Men make their Court by Debauchery, and know no other Politicks, than what an inveterate Averſion to the National Government and Conſtitution, or a more inveterate one to Religion and Virtue ſuggeſt.

But if your Country move you not, conſider yet what you owe your ſelves: Idleneſs is both a Reproach and Burden; for what can be more diſhonourable, than to be good for nothing; or more irkſome to an active Nature, ſuch as Man's

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is, than to have nothing to employ it? What can be more ſhameful, than for a wealthy, or well-born Man, to be the pity or ſport of his Country, or the inward ſcorn even of his Domeſticks and Neighbours? And what can be a greater Plague, than for one who is Maſter of his whole Time, and of an ample Fortune, not to know how to employ the one or the other, but in ſuch Courſes as tend to the Diſgrace of his Family, the Ruin of his Country, and the Damnation of his Soul? *You* ought too, to remember that great Fortunes do generally mark Men out for great Troubles, as well as great Enjoyments; and were there no other Motive to a vigorous and active Life, but this one, That it did fortifie the Courage, and harden the Temper, this ſhould be ſufficient to any Man, who will but conſider to how many Changes and Revolutions, how many Diſaſters and Miſchiefs a great Fortune renders Men obnoxious; ſo that when Men had not yet entertained the Opinion of the unlawfulneſs of Self-murther, Poiſon, as appears from *Livy*'s Reflection on *Maſaniſſa*'s Preſent to his Miſtreſs, was a part of the Domeſtick Proviſion of

of the Families of the Great, and a Poiſon-Bearer ſeems to have been almoſt as natural an Office as a Cup-Bearer.

The Sum of all is, Gifts of Fortune, like thoſe of Grace or Nature, as they capacitate and qualifie, ſo do they deſign and oblige Men to ſuitable Duties; and Chriſtianity expects Increaſe proportionable to Mens Talents. Not Idleneſs and Luxury, not Ignorance and Debauchery, but Knowledge and Vertue, and a more eminent degree of Service to God and Man, ought to be the diſtinctive Character of the Rich and Great, (for how ſhould that be the Privilege of an illuſtrious Birth and ample Fortune, which is a Reproach and Diſhonour to Humane Nature?) Theſe are the Abilities that conſtitute Gentlemen truly great, that make them the Props of a ſinking State, or the Stars and Glories of a flouriſhing one; this is that which the Safety and Glory of your Country, and your own Happineſs and Poſterity demand at your Hands; and happy were it, if the Laws and Cuſtoms of our Country, as once thoſe of the beſt conſtituted Kingdoms and Commonwealths, did exact Virtue and Induſtry with the greateſt Rigour,

Rigour, and puniſhed Idleneſs and Riot with Infamy, Baniſhment and Death.

Nor has any one reaſon to complain, that to oblige the Gentleman to an active and induſtrious Life, is to debaſe his Quality, or to invade his Liberty, much leſs to rob him of all the Pleaſures and Advantages he is born to; on the quite contrary, an active Vertue is the Honour of a Gentleman; this is the only ſolid Foundation the Love and Eſteem of his Country can be built on; all other Advantages of Fortune do but adorn him as a Pageant, to be the ſport and gaze of the Crowd, and all that have ſenſe enough to diſtinguiſh between Merit and Fortune, will inwardly deſpiſe the Fool and Sluggard, whatever Courtſhip and Compliment they may make to the Eſquire and Landlord. And as Buſineſs can be no diminution of his Honour, ſo neither can it be of his Liberty; for not to inſiſt upon that great Truth, That the Service of Vertue is the only Freedom or Liberty of Man; not to mind you, that the Buſineſs of Men of Wealth and Birth is always a matter of Choice, not Neceſſity, they being ever in a Condition to retire when they ſhall judge their Privacy and

Leiſure more valuable than their Employments; this one ſingle Conſideration cannot but ſilence this Suggeſtion, That no Man is leſs Maſter of himſelf and Time, than the Man that has an ample Fortune and no Buſineſs; for he is always expoſed to the Forms and Impertinences, to the Humours and Sottiſhneſs of a number of People as idle and ignorant as himſelf; and I think there can be no Servitude ſo wretched, as that to Luxury and Vanity, nor any Confinement or Attendance ſo tedious, as a compliance with the Folly, with the Trifling and Looſneſs of the World; but Buſineſs is at all times a comely Excuſe, and never fails of putting a Man handſomly in poſſeſſion of his Liberty, and the diſpoſal of his own Time and Actions.

But of all the Aſperſions with which Addreſſes of this kind are wont to be aſſaulted, there is none more palpably injurious than this, That to condemn a Gentleman to Buſineſs, is to rob him of his Pleaſures; for the Truth is, 'tis Buſineſs and Imployment that gives guſt and reliſh to Pleaſure; 'tis this that prevents the Diſeaſe of Pleaſure, Surfeit and Satiety; and makes Diverſion always new,

and

and Nature always vigorous; 'tis true indeed, a rational and manly Employment, ſo raiſes and fortifies the Mind, that it is above being a Slave to Senſual Pleaſure, and ſo entertains it, that it needs not make vitious and ſinful Pleaſure a Refuge againſt the dulneſs and nauſeouſneſs of Life: But after all, tho' all this be true, there is one conſideration more important ſtill, which is, That the Buſineſs of a Gentleman, if diſcharged as it ought to be, is always attended with Pleaſure, and that a more brisk and ſenſible one than he can find in any thing elſe; for whether he protect the Oppreſſed, or oppoſe the Violent and the Unjuſt by his Power; whether he ſteer the Ignorant and the Simple to their Harbour by his Wiſdom, or relieve the Neceſſity of the Poor by his Wealth; whether he ſupport a ſinking Friend, or raiſe a deſerving Creature; whether he aſſert the Authority of Laws, and maintain the Rights of his Country; in a word, whether he aſſiſt the Publick or the Private by his Fortunes, his Abilities or Vertues; all theſe Works have ſomething in them ſo great, ſo generous, that I cannot but think the Opportunities and Capacities of theſe the higheſt Privileges

and

and Prerogatives of a Fortunate Birth. It was the Sabbath, the Reſt of God, when he beheld all his Works, that they were exceeding good; nor can I believe God took more pleaſure in the Creation than he does in the Preſervation and Government of the World: How pleaſing then muſt be the Reflections upon theſe God-like Works, for tho' this be not to create a new World, it is certainly to imbeliſh, govern, and ſupport the old. There is little reaſon to imagine why the Works of Vertue ſhould procure their Authors leſs pleaſure than thoſe of Fancy, Wit, and Learning do theirs. Why the Poet ſhould feel a bigger Joy riſe from a witty Poem, the Painter from a well finiſhed Piece, the Architect from a well contrived Building, the Scholar from a juſt and regular Diſcourſe, than a Gentleman ſhould from the happy and honourable Effects of Wiſdom, Courage, Bounty, and Magnanimity; theſe ſure are the greater Excellencies, and as the Original is more noble, ſo is the Iſſue too; for certainly to preſerve the Lives and Fortunes of Men, is much more than to make them ſeem to live in Imagery; to raiſe a Family, is much more than

than to contrive and build a Houſe; to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and actually diſperſe the Clouds and Sorrows of the Afflicted, by a preſent and vigorous Remedy, is much more than to treat the Fancy of the ſoft and vain; and in one word, actually to compoſe the Diviſions, allay the Heats, govern the Impetuoſities, and reſtrain the Exorbitant Paſſions of Men by the force of Laws, by the influence of Example, and that Authority and Aſcendant which the Fortunes and Abilities of the great Ones give them over their Inferiors, is in my judgment a much more ſignal Service to God and Man, than it can ever be to debate a Controverſie with the moſt diſtinguiſhing Judgment, or write an Exhortation with warmth and briskneſs.

Having thus demonſtrated that Perſons of Ranks and Fortune lie under many and ſtrong Obligations to activity in their Sphere, and confuted thoſe Objections which are commonly oppoſed againſt it, I will proceed to lay before them, with all due reſpect, ſuch Rules as may guard them againſt that Envy and Danger, that Toil and Diſcontent which uſually accompanies the Motion

of

of the Great, as Dirt, or Duſt, or Heat, that of their Chariots; and which, on the other ſide, may render their Activity a great inſtrument of their Felicity; for I would not that ſuch as are the common Patrons and Benefactors of Mankind, ſhould meet with no other recompence but trouble and hazard; as if, like Clouds, they could not refreſh and impregnate the Earth, unleſs they were themſelves diſſolved and waſted into ſhowers: I would have every worthy Action be an Acceſſion to their Greatneſs, and every honourable Performance carry with it a Reward, which ſhould not depend upon the humour of the Prince, or levity of the People.

Sect. 2. *Rules to be obſerved by the Gentleman in a publick Station, or in order to the Happineſs of a* Civil Life.

1. He muſt be endow'd with *Knowledge.*
2. With *Vertues* proper and neceſſary to his Rank and Station.
3. He ought to be conſtant, reſolved, and vigorous throughout the whole Conduct and Courſe of his Life and Affairs.

4. His

4. His Time ought not to be ſo wholly taken up in Buſineſs, as not to leave Vacancies for *Religion*, *Meditation*, *Friendſhip*, and *Diverſion*.

Firſt, Of the Gentleman's *Knowledge*. There is no Fortune that *Knowledge* better becomes, or that ſtands more in need of it, than a Gentleman's; without it an Eſtate is rather cumberſome than uſeful, and the ignorant Owner muſt be the Tool or Inſtrument of another's Ambition or Intereſt, the Prey of a menial Servant, or the Property of an imperious Wife or wanton Child, or which is worſe, of ſome crafty Retainer, who grows impudent with the Favour, rich with the Spoils, both of the Honour and Fortune of his Maſter: The beſt that can befal ſuch a one is, If he have the good luck to light into good hands, and join himſelf with a right Party, he may be the Apendage of ſome others Fortune, the Shade and Umbra of another, who intercepts the Smiles and Thanks due to him; he may, in a word, talk and act by the Senſe and Reaſon of his Party. This is a poor and contemptible Condition to a Man of Birth and Fortune, to be incapable

pable of imploying or improving the Advantages he is born to, and to be only the Prey or Tool of the Cunning, Avarice, Ambition, and impotent Paſſions of others; or at beſt, the Inſtrument of a wiſer Man; for the Wiſe is born to rule the Fool.

Nor is this all, the Gentleman's Ignorance is ſo much the more worthy of Reproach, becauſe he appears to be born to greater Opportunities of Knowledge, as he that ſtands upon a more eminent height does naturally enjoy a more free and open proſpect.

But what is worſe than all this, a Patrician Fortune joined with a Plebian Underſtanding, renders a Man not more liable to ſuffer Miſchief, than apt to commit it; for if the Man have much Paſſion, and no Underſtanding, as Wealth is apt to inſpire Men with Pride and Wilfulneſs, tho' it cannot with Wiſdom, what can be expected from ſuch a Perſon, who hath power enough to execute his Paſſions, and no reaſon to reſtrain them! who looks upon it as a Contumely to be oppoſed, and tho' he hath no ſenſe himſelf, is too big to hear it from another! what can ſuch a Man be but a Plague to him-

himſelf and others! and what can his Wealth and Intereſt be, but reſiſtleſs Inſtruments of Evil! It is then indiſpenſibly neceſſary, as well for the avoiding Evil, as doing Good, that the great Man be endowed with a *good Underſtanding.*

The firſt thing he ought to be well acquainted with is *Religion*, as the only ſource of ſolid Wiſdom, and the main ground of a juſt and laſting Reputation; nor indeed can I ſee how a Man can be conſiderable without it; for tho' baſe Ends require baſe Inſtruments in all other Caſes, I ſee not how either Prince or People can truſt thoſe Men who are falſe to God and themſelves: 'Tis ſcarce to be expected, that he who Sacrifices his Religion and his Reaſon, that is, himſelf, to any Luſt or Paſſion, ſhould be nice and ſcrupulous of giving up a remoter Intereſt or Obligation to it. But when I ſay the Gentleman ſhould be acquainted with Religion, I do not mean that he ſhould perplex or amuſe himſelf with the Diſputes that have debauch'd, or Subtleties and Niceties which have diſpirited or enervated Chriſtianity; I would have him have ſo much Illumination as to be able to diſtinguiſh between Natural Religion

ligion and the Politicks, Revealed Religion and the Phanſies and Whimſies of Man: I would have him throughly inſtructed in the Reaſons and Grounds of our common Chriſtianity, and ſtudy and ruminate them till he feel the Power of them, and find himſelf formed and impreſſed by them. He underſtands Religion well, who learns from it what it is to be juſt, and derives from it Courage enough to dare to be ſo. I ſhould think it a neceſſary part of this Knowledge, or at leaſt a good accompliſhment in a Gentleman, to be ſo far acquainted with Eccleſiaſtical Story, as not to be ignorant what influence Religion, or the Pretences of it, has upon the World, and what uſe cunning Men have ever made of it; by what Degrees or what Arts the Maxims of the World have been incorporated into Religion, and the Church hath wound and inſinuated it ſelf into the State. Thus you will diſcern what the true Meaſures of Religion are; you will have a juſt regard for wiſe Conſtitutions without Bigottry; you will free your ſelves from all thoſe Doubts and Scruples which uſher in Atheiſm and Prophaneneſs; and, in a word, you will find Religion the true

Standard

Standard of Wiſdom and Diſcretion, the effectual Inſtrument of private and publick Good, and the infallible Guide to Honour and Happineſs.

Next to the *Knowledge* of Religion, follows the *Knowledge* of the World, which may be divided into the Knowledge of Matters and Men, which is ſo neceſſary in every part, in every act of Life, but eſpecially of a publick one, that I cannot but wonder at the vanity of ſuch as can fancy it poſſible to maintain a ſolid Reputation in their Country, and fill any Station honourably or happily without it. The confidence of an Emperick, or other ſuch wretched Projectors and Undertakers, ſeems to me Modeſty and Virtue, compared to the ſhameleſneſs and wickedneſs of ſuch Men as obtrude themſelves upon Affairs of a publick Nature, unſtudied, unverſed in Things or Men, that is, totally unqualified; which whoever conſiders the difficulty of managing them well, or the miſchievous conſequences of miſcarrying in them, muſt confeſs. Let the Gentleman therefore ſtudy the Laws and Conſtitutions of the Realm, its Changes and Revolutions in their Cauſes, Progreſs,

and Effects, its Natural and Political Strengths and Weakneſſes, Defects and Excellencies, together with its Foreign Intereſts, Relation and Dependencies; nor let him be wholly ignorant of the Frame and Policy of other Kingdoms, tho' he ought to be beſt verſed in our own; he muſt travel abroad, but dwell at home; for I would have him have a Veneration, not Superſtition, for the Laws and Cuſtoms of his own Country; for I doubt the Wiſdom of our own Nation is not great enough to juſtifie the neglect, much leſs contempt of that of Foreign Ones; and becauſe what they call the Law of Nature is only the Law of right Reaſon, in thoſe great Precepts of it, which ſeem immutable and inviolable, and the ſame in all Times and Places; He ought not to be a Stranger to this, leſt being ignorant of the true Grounds of Humane Society, and of the Nature and Obligation of particular Laws, every new Emergency, Change, or Deviation from the common Road, diſcover his Inſufficiency; for 'tis a miſerable thing to ſee how, through the ſimplicity and weakneſs of ſome, and the ſubtilty and cunning of others, Laws

which

which ſhould be the Fences and Bulwarks of the People, are often made only their Chains and Fetters; and thoſe publick and ſolemn Ties which were deſigned to ſtrengthen and fortifie the Conſtitution, become the moſt fatal Engines of undermining and ſubverting it. I have obſerved many, who would be excellent Perſons in a regular and calm ſtate of Affairs, that are miſerably perplexed, and at a loſs, or wretchedly abuſed or impoſed upon in a diſordered and unſettled one; like a Perſon of my Acquaintance, who rides well in incloſed and narrow Roads, but her Brains begin to ſwim, and her Heart to fail her on Downs and Plains.

After all, that I may not ſeem to be treating rather of Speculation than Action, and to have propoſed ſuch an Extenſion of Knowledge, as if I were recommending rather a Life of Study than of Buſineſs, I muſt put you in mind, that the deſign of this ſort of Learning ought to be to make Men Wiſe, not Subtle; Judicious, not Diſputative: That Curioſity or Diligence in Matters minute, or ſubtle, has more in it of Amuſement than Uſe, and that to lay the Foundation too deep and broad, does ſeldom quit the coſt; and

in a word, it ſeems to me to be in Policy, as in Religion, he is the moſt Prudent who beſt underſtands the particular Laws or Precepts of his particular Station, as he is the moſt Religious who is beſt Learned, not in the univerſal Scheme of Theology, but the regulation of his own Affections, and the conduct of his own Life.

But in vain does he ſtudy Things who knows not Men; for Man is the Inſtrument of Power and Policy, and whoever knows how to manage and gain an Aſcendant over him, is the moſt conſiderable in his Country, and able to do the greateſt Miſchief, or the greateſt Good: But when I talk of knowing Men, I mean not only ſuch a *knowledge* of particular Perſons as may inſtruct you what to hope, or what to fear from them, what Employments or Truſts they are fit or unfit for; and, in a word, who are proper or improper Inſtruments in different Affairs, Times, and Circumſtances; who are fit to be the Partners of your Pleaſures and Diverſions, who of your Confidences and Secrets, and ſuch like; but alſo the knowledge of Humane Nature, to be throughly read in all the Springs and Reſorts of Humane Actions, in all the va-

various Paſſions and Diſeaſes of the Mind of Man, with all their Cauſes and Cures, and to be able to diſtinguiſh the genuine and natural, from the acquired and artificial Perſon; and becauſe not ſingle Perſons only, but Times and Ages, Nations, Cities, and leſſer Bodies and Societies, have their particular Temper and Genius, theſe muſt not be neglected neither. This is the Knowledge, which, together with a dextrous Uſe and Application of it, is the very Life and Soul of worldly Prudence, and makes up the beginning, middle, and end of true Policy; but after all, both with reſpect to the Publick, and a Man's own Good, that ought to be a Rule for the Man of Buſineſs which St. *Paul* preſcribes for a Biſhop, *Let him firſt learn to rule his own Houſe well.* He that will be truly wiſe, ſhould know himſelf firſt, e'er he goes about to know the World, and begin the practice of his Politicks in his own Family, and in the ſettlement and due adminiſtration of his Domeſtick Affairs, in which, if he cannot ſucceed, I muſt confeſs I cannot ſee what Encouragement either Prince or People can have to confide in ſuch a one; for the Diſorders or Diſſipations of a private

Fortune are very ominous Preſages of a Male-Adminiſtration of publick Truſt. Nor can I ſee what can induce ſuch a Man to undertake it, but the meer hopes of repairing his private Dilapidations with the Stones and Timber of the Publick.

But after all, how neceſſary ſoever I account Knowledge in a Gentleman engaged in an Active Station, yet I cannot but obſerve, that whether we regard the Publick or the Private, Wickedneſs has ever been more fatal and diſhonourable to both, than Ignorance; and all Truſts have ſuffered more in the hands of the Falſe and the Baſe, than of the Unfit and Unſufficient: Therefore,

Secondly, The Gentleman ought to be enriched with Virtues, eſpecially thoſe which become his Rank and Station. Knowledge is but the Seed of Virtue, and like that, it only rots and putrifies, if it grow not up into excellent Habits, and bring not forth the Fruits of vertuous Actions. There is ſcarce any Station which does not require a particular Virtue, either to diſcharge or adorn it; one Patience, another Courage, a third Vigilance, and ſo on; there being ſcarce any Office or Buſineſs which is not liable

to

to ſome particular Inconveniences and Temptations: But it being impoſſible for me to proſecute all theſe, I will only inſiſt on two or three which are eſſential to all true Greatneſs and Honour, and, if I am not much miſtaken, to a happy and proſperous diſpatch of all Affairs, I am ſure to the Security and Felicity of the Publick and Private; theſe are *Integrity*, *Magnanimity*, *Humanity*.

Firſt, *Integrity*. By Integrity, I mean two things, Juſtice and Truth: The firſt, to regulate our Actions; the ſecond, our Words. Nor do I take Juſtice in a beggerly barreting Senſe, as if the Gentleman had acquitted himſelf of a Due well enough, if there were any plauſible pretence to excuſe a Violation or Omiſſion of it; as if he were to regard more what the Law could compel, than what Honour did oblige him to; and by Honour, I mean the Teſtimony of his own Conſcience, both concerning his deligent and impartial Enquiries after the right, and ſincerity in purſuing it; for I would not have him appear to do right, rather out of the fear of Infamy, than love of Virtue. The word of a Gentleman ought to be fixed and unmoveable as Fate, ſacred

and inviolable as the Alar. Contracts, and Evidences, and Seals, and Oaths, were deviſed to tie Fools, and Knaves, and Cowards: Honour and Conſcience are the more firm and ſacred Ties of Gentlemen. Nor muſt this Honour extend only to private Dealings, but much more to publick; in which, good God! how comely, how noble is it to ſee Integrity triumphing over Intereſt and Paſſion? To ſee a great Man preferring Truth and Juſtice to the Favour or Menaces of Princes, and readily quitting all Intereſt, and all Parties, to ſupport the publick Safety and Honour, or fall with it. But as Heroick as I would have the Gentleman, I would not have him vain, I would not have him led or impoſed upon by empty Noiſe and Names, I would have him love a good Name, but much more a good Conſcience, for I would have him as Judicious as Reſolved, as Bright and Luminous as Brave and Inflexible; for I admire not an Integrity that bids defiance to Prudence and right Reaſon; I love a ſteady Faith and unmoveable Juſtice, but not Romance and Fancy; I would have a great Man not inſenſible of a difference between Loyalty and Slavery,

between

between Tyranny and Anarchy; and in the ſame manner he muſt be able to diſtinguiſh between a Serpentine Subtlety, and a ſtupid Inſufficiency, and want of neceſſary Addreſs and Dexterity; without ſuch a competency of Knowledge, all will be but Folly, not Integrity; Vanity, not Conſtancy. As there is an Integrity in Action, ſo is there in Speech too, it ſeems to me not to conſiſt in bare Truth only, but alſo in an ingenuous openneſs and freedom, cloudineſs and ambiguity ſeems to me rather fit to diſguiſe Ignorance or Deſign, than to pourtray or expreſs the Sentiments of a wiſe or an upright Mind; yet in Words, as well as Deeds, there is an Extream; tho' frankneſs and openneſs in Converſation, like a free and a generous Air, become a Gentleman, I would not have Freedom violate Diſcretion, nor Simplicity and Openneſs leſſen Greatneſs; too many and wide Apertures, if they add Beauty, do certainly diminiſh the ſtrength of a Building.

Secondly, The next Virtue beſeeming a Gentleman, is *Magnanimity*: By which I do not mean an empty Tumour, but ſolid Greatneſs of Mind, which ought to diſcover it ſelf in every Inſtance of his Life;

Life; I ſay in every Inſtance, for I count it not enough to bear Diſappointments with moderation, unleſs he bear his Succeſs ſo too: I count it not enough to encounter Dangers with Courage, unleſs he encounter his Pleaſures with as great; and in a word, there ought to be ſomething even in his Diverſions and Entertainments, as well as in his Buſineſs and Employment, that may ſpeak the ſtrength and wealth, and ſelf-ſufficiency of his Mind. You'll eaſily conclude this with me, if you allow theſe two or three Things to be eſſential to true Greatneſs of Mind; an invincible Courage and Reſolution; a rational and generous Activity; and an enlarged and publick Spirit; which you cannot but allow, unleſs you think that the Coward and Slave, the Sluggard or Sot, the Sordid and Selfiſh, may be reckoned amongſt the Magnanimous. But what Principle, what Foundation, is able to ſupport ſo mighty a Weight? Natural Courage may make a Man brave Danger, or if that will not, Ambition may; while it preſents him with a more formidable Evil if he turn his Back upon the other; but what ſhall make the Man modeſt and humble in his Tri-

Triumps, who was gallant and daring in Fight? Paſſion and Revenge may make Men firm and fierce in their Conteſts and Oppoſitions, but what can make a Man forgive when he is in a Condition to revenge an Injury? The Luſt of Power, and Honour, and Wealth, that is, Self-love, may render a Man active and induſtrious; but what is it that can prevail with him to Sacrifice his own Intereſt, and his Family's, to publick Good? Honour has been generally thought the moſt likely Principle to do all this. I muſt confeſs, a Breaſt inflamed with love of Honour, ſeems to me incapable of any mean or baſe Impreſſion; but then the Notion of Honour ought to be juſtly ſtated; for if by this, we underſtand the Smiles and Courtſhips of the Great, or the Praiſes or Acclamations of the People, it had need be in ſettled Times; a wiſe Court, and a modeſt People: I doubt there is not Judgment enough in the People, nor Plainneſs and Simplicity enough in Courts, to give Men and Actions a true Value; and therefore, if a Man would propoſe Honour as the Reward of his Actions, it ought to be that which conſiſts in the Approbation of

of ſuch who are able and diſintereſſed Judges; a miſtake in this point is often of very ill conſequence, and perverts the whole Courſe of Humane Life, betraying either into factious Oppoſition, or ſordid and unworthy Compliance. Nor is this the only Inconvenience that the Love of Honour is obnoxious to, That Men may be miſled and abuſed by falſe and miſtaken Notions of it; but it alſo often happens, that Envy and Emulation in particular Men, or the Violence of a prevailing Faction, or the Iniquity of Times may ſtifle and oppreſs the Merit, or traduce and blaſt the Integrity of the moſt excellent Actions; in which Caſes, I doubt, the ſecret Opinion of two or three virtuous Men, or an Expectation of greater Juſtice from future Times, will be too weak a Cordial to ſupport an injured Virtue, if its only Nouriſhment and Suſtenance be Honour. I think therefore Religion is the only Baſis on which Magnanimity can ſtand, by which I mean a love of rational and virtuous Actions upon wiſe and ſolid Grounds, a ſecret Delight and Complacency in the performance of them, accompanied with the Peace and Serenity of Mind that

ſprings

ſprings from Reflection upon them, and the Joy which a firm Perſuaſion that God will be our Rewarder breeds in us; this, as it will ſecure us againſt the Errors, ſo will it againſt the Inconſtancy and Injuſtice of the World; this will miniſter ſufficient Motives to generous Actions, when we meet nothing but Diſcouragements from all things elſe; this, if it will not make a publick Employment honourable, will always make it ſafe; this, if it cannot render great Places profitable, will ever render Retirement pleaſant, and in all the Changes of Times and Humours, will preſerve a Man ſteady and calm in himſelf.

But whilſt I recommend Magnanimity, I muſt not forget that there are Follies and Vices which often are wont to uſurp its Name. I never thought that the love of our Country did imply a Neglect, much leſs a Contempt of our private Fortune: That a vain Confidence or Preſumption in provoking and irritating Dangers ought to paſs for Courage; for this were to make Fortitude and Prudence incompatible: Nor do I think that a violent intruſion into Buſineſs, or an indiſcreet intangling a Man's ſelf in much,

or engaging in any that is foreign or impertinent, deſerves the Name of Induſtry or Activity; or Pride, Stiffneſs, and Savageneſs, the name of Firmneſs and Conſtancy; for, in a word, I would have Magnanimity rather lovely than haughty, rather revered than dreaded; Therefore,

Thirdly, *Humanity* is the next Virtue to be aimed at. Nothing can be more fitly joined with Magnanimity than Compaſſion, with Courage than Tenderneſs, nor with the Filicity of a great Fortune, than Charity or Bounty. I cannot think that there is a truer Character of Greatneſs, than to be a Sanctuary to the Injur'd, a Patron to Virtue and Merit, a Counſellor to thoſe that Err, and a Support to the Afflicted, the Needy, and Defenceleſs. In theſe Things conſiſt the Life and Subſtance of Humanity, the Ornamental part of it, is *Affability* or *Courteouſneſs*; the Art of Behaviour lies in a narrow compaſs, the whole skill of it conſiſting in obliging, which he ſhall never miſs, who has once poſſeſſed his Soul with Tenderneſs and Goodneſs; for then every Word, every Action, together with the whole Air of Deportment, will be animated with a reſiſtleſs ſweetneſs, and will be nothing elſe but the Portraiture

traiture and Expreſſion of thoſe excellent Diſpoſitions; by this means too, the Deportment will be Natural, not Artificial; and tho' it be generally kind, it will be more particularly ſo, where it meets with a more moving Occaſion; to which, if it be added, that the Carriage of a Gentleman ought to be Humble, but not Popular, Courteous, but not Cheap or Proſtitute, you will decline all the conſiderable Errors, to which Affability is obnoxious.

It was the Cuſtom of the Ancients, to deliver their Inſtruction in ſhort and plain Sentences, without a labour'd Exhortation, or paſſionate Enforcement. And certainly there is ſuch a commanding Authority in the Dictates of Truth and Wiſdom, ſuch a Divinity, Majeſty, and Lovelineſs in ſolid Virtues, that did the Simplicity and Probity obtain in theſe, which is ſuppoſed to have done in thoſe Times, Advice of this ſort would eaſily make its way to the Hearts of Men without the aſſiſtance of any Motives. But I dare not be either ſo confident of my own Performance, or of the Times, as not to think it neceſſary to cloſe the Advice of theſe Paragraphs, with ſome Arguments and Motives to theſe Virtues.

Shall

Shall I make uſe here of the Topicks of Religion? Shall I invite you to Integrity and Magnanimity, from the Conſideration of the Omniſcience and Providence of God? Shall I put you in mind how little Sordidneſs, Falſhood and Fear; how little Pride and Inſolence, can become the Principles and Perſuaſions of a Chriſtian, concerning the Emptineſs and Vanity of this World, or the true Happineſs and laſting Glory of another? Shall I preſs you to Humanity, to Meekneſs and Humility, by calling to your remembrance the Life of Jeſus, your Frailty and Mortality, and, what is worſe, your Sins and Follies? Shall I ſhew you how mutable and inconſtant your Fortune is; and if it were not, how accidental, fantaſtick and inconſiderable a diſtinction this makes between you and Perſons of a lower Rank? And that they ſtand at leaſt upon the ſame Level with you, in reſpect of the ſubſtantial and ſolid Intereſts of Humane Nature, that is, the favour of God, Virtue, Grace, and Glory? Alas! I am afraid you have generally but little Reliſh or Guſt of this ſort of Arguments.

But have you as little value for your Coun-

Country, as Religion? Are you as little moved by the Ruine of this, as the Corruption of that? Behold your Country once formidable abroad, and well compact within; ah! now what reproach and Contumelies does it not ſuffer abroad? What Convulſions at home? Its Wealth has neither Service nor Defence in it. Its Numbers are without Courage, and its Forces have nothing of Strength or Terror in them. Why all this? it bleeds in your Factions and Diviſions, it reels and ſtaggers under your Softneſs and Luxury; 'Tis betrayed by your Falſhood and Cowardiſe; Ah! That its Reformation might begin where its Degeneracy has, and that it might recover by your Virtues, the Honour it has loſt and forfeited by your Vices! Pardon me, I do not here ſuppoſe that there are none exempt from this Accuſation; That in the Body of the Nobility and Gentry there are not, even in this degenerate Age, ſome bright Inſtances of a true *Engliſh* Courage and Integrity; I only wiſh that there were more, that there were enough to Atone for the reſt, and to prop up this declining *State*. Nor is it a petulant Humour, but a Zeal for your Honour particularly,

as well as that of the Nations, that now acts me; for give me leave to put you in mind at length,

That your Honour, your Intereſt, and your Happineſs depend upon your Integrity, Magnanimity, and Humanity; nor is it poſſible that the one ſhould ſurvive the other. *Firſt* your *Honour*. The whole World is poſſeſſed in favour of theſe Virtues; and however it hath fared with ſome other, theſe have ever been in vogue, not amongſt the beſt only, but worſt of Mankind. I have indeed underſtood that there are ſome who have openly profeſſed and defended Intemperance and Incontinence, but I think none ever yet have in earneſt undertook the Patronage of *Cowardiſe*, *Perfidiouſneſs*, *Inhumanity*, or *Inſolence*. I have never yet met with any, who have not thought it ſcandalous and reproachful to find leſs *Faith*, leſs *Honour*, leſs *Goodneſs*, or if you pleaſe, more ſhifting *Cowardiſe*, *Falſhood*, and *Sordidneſs* in his Lordſhip, or his Worſhip, than in a Goom or Lackey. Nor did I ever find, that Lands and Scutcheons, Wealthy Relations, and Honourable Anceſtors, were ever looked upon as Apologies or Mitigations, but rather Aggrava-

gravations of ſuch Baſeneſs and Degeneracy; nor could any Man ever think it a Commendation to be the Sinks and Sewers of a Noble Family, the Ruins of an ancient, and once ſtately Pile, or the Lees and Dregs of a rich Liquor long ſince drawn off, and evaporated. Nor does your *Honour* only, but *Secondly* your *Intereſt* depend on theſe Virtues. If you want theſe, I ſee not what you can poſſeſs, that can either gain you the Favour of the Prince, or Eſteem of the People: This ſure is the Reaſon why theſe Virtues have ever been in ſuch credit in the World, becauſe their influence is ſo neceſſary, ſo univerſally ſerviceable, whether to the Publick, or to Friends and Dependants; now that Integrity which can give others ground confidently to rely upon you, that Generoſity and Magnanimity which raiſes their Hopes and Expectations, does naturally give you an Authority and Aſcendant over them, and you become the Maſters of their Lives and Fortunes, whilſt they promiſe themſelves the Protection or Improvement of them from your Virtues: To theſe then you muſt owe the Patronage and Confidence of thoſe above you, the Dependance,

Love, and Eſteem of thoſe below you, without which, what can you effect, what can you enjoy truly great or conſiderable? You are impotent and contemptible as Ploughmen and Sailers when ſolitary and abandon'd; your Retinue and Dependance, your Friends and Admirers make you powerful: In ſhort, a Man of Birth and Fortune that is Perfidious, Cowardly, Selfiſh and Proud, has not in my Judgment, or deſerves not to have half the Intereſt an honeſt Yeoman or plain-dealing Tradeſman has in City or Country; for what Confidence can be placed in ſuch a one? will he be tender of the Honour of his Country, or his Friend, who has no ſenſe of his own? Or will he ever be either a good Patron or Friend, who is ready to ſacrifice all to his private Avarice? Nor is it a matter of ſmall importance, that Reputation founded in Virtue ſurmounts all ſorts of Difficulties, and Crowns all Undertakings with Succeſs; and ſince Men are naturally backward when they are jealous and diſtruſtful, but prompt and forward where they are ſecure and confident; it has ever been obſerved, that Integrity (if not deſtitute of competent Prudence) has in diſpatch of Affairs

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ever out-ſtripped Craft and Subtlety. But the weightieſt Conſideration of all is, that theſe Virtues, if they be not the ſureſt Foundation of Greatneſs, are doubtleſs of Happineſs; for they will make a Man find a Tranquillity in his Mind, when he cannot in his Fortune: The Conſcience of a Man's own Uprightneſs will alleviate the Toil of Buſineſs, and ſweeten the Harſhneſs of ill Succeſs and Diſappointments, and give him an humble Confidence before God, when the Ingratitude of Man, or the Iniquity of Times, rob him of all other Reward.

Having thus given an Account of theſe Two Things, wherein conſiſt the Sufficiency of a Man of Buſineſs, that is, *Knowledge* and *Virtue*, I will proceed to the Conſideration of the Third Rule.

Thirdly, The Gentleman ought to be Conſtant, Reſolved, and Vigorous in his Motion. *Conſtancy* and *Vigour*, whether in the acquiſition of Knowledge, or improvement of Virtue, or Management of Affairs, are of the greateſt moment and importance. I ever prefer a ſtrong before a fine Edge; Induſtry and Reſolution, before Wit and Parts: He that makes a daily progreſs, how ſlow ſoever it be,

will in time reach his Stage; vaſt Bodies and mighty Armies, by conſtant marches, have travelled through thoſe unknown Regions, which a ſingle Perſon would almoſt deſpair of compaſſing in his Life-time. To what a height does the Tree raiſe its Head, though its Root fix in the heart of the Earth? becauſe thô it grow ſlowly, and even imperceptibly, yet it grows conſtantly, and receives ſome acceſſion every moment. Thus Rule, as I inſinuated before, is applicable to Knowledge, Virtue, and Buſineſs. To *Knowledge*. To what would not an Ingenious Perſon, furniſhed with all aids of Science, advance his Proſpect, if he uſed but moderate induſtry, and proceeded regularly? What could there be in any Science, which were either of any uſe, or any certainty, that could eſcape him? And other things ought not to ſtop him; They may be his Diverſion, but ought not be his Study. I believe there are few Natures but are capable, if not of eminent Accompliſhment, yet of ſuch Improvement as may render them conſiderable and uſeful enough, if they would apply themſelves to the Study of Knowledge with any tolerable vigour, or exert their vigour with

with any regularity and uniformity? 'Tis owing to lazineſs and wantonneſs, that the ſlow and heavy attain not to ſuch Abilities as might ſuffice to ſet them off, and to make them ſhew tolerably well: And 'tis to the ſame that the quick and witty owe their want of all Solidity and Judgment, while they diſcover only enough to make the World juſtly condemn them, as wanting to themſelves and their Country, being bad Stewards of a naturally rich and improveable Eſtate, careleſs and ill Maſters of good Parts.

Nor is Conſtancy leſs ſerviceable in the purſuit of Vertue than of Knowledge. Vertue, when acquired, is confeſſed by all to be eaſie and delightful, becauſe natural and rational; but to acquire it, this is the difficulty; but 'tis ſuch a one as Conſtancy and Courage would eaſily vanquiſh: 'Tis generally thought there is in moſt at firſt ſome ſort of impetus towards good, which if it were conſtantly cheriſhed, would ſoon turn into habit and nature; but fits and heats of Religion, broken and interrupted Eſſays and Attempts, do only keep up ſo much guſt for Vertue, as makes us a little diſguſt the Enjoyments of Sin, and preſerves ſo

much of Conſcience as ſerves to diſturb and perplex us. But be it how it will, let us ſuppoſe Man infected in his Nature, and what is worſe, over-run by vitious Habits, yet even then the ſame care, watchfulneſs, and diſcipline that cures a Chronical Diſtemper of the Body, would heal an habitual Diſeaſe of the Mind; and one may reform and enrich a degenerate Mind with as little pains as it will coſt to recover a decayed and ruinated Eſtate.

But let me return to my main Subject, that is, the Conduct of *Civil Buſineſs*. Here, I am ſure, an uniform conſtancy and regular vigour is exacted by all; I have ſeldom obſerved Men of great Ability do great things without great diligence and reſolution; I am ſure I have ſeen them miſcarry foully, when Perſons of lower Talents have ſucceeded very well: Nay, the truth is, vigour and reſolution are ſuch noble Characters, that whoever appears endowed with them, can never himſelf miſcarry, thô his Deſigns ſometimes may; he can never be a loſer in Honour and Reputation, but generally appears a great Man, even in the moſt unfortunate Accidents,

and

and makes even ill Succeſs it ſelf atteſt his ſufficiency. But commonly difficulties give way to the diligence and reſolution of great Men; and if to day will not, to morrow will ſmile upon their Enterprizes; there are luky Minutes in Buſineſs, when what before had Wind and Tide againſt it, moves with the Stream; whither will not he then carry his point, who never lets ſlip the lucky Moment through Negligence, and never fails through Cowardice or Lazineſs to urge and puſh on his good Succeſs?

But how much ſoever *Vigour* and *Conſtancy* be commended, as moſt ſerviceable to Succeſs in Buſineſs, as one of the greateſt Perfections that Man is capable of, and the beſt Inſtrument of attaining all others, yet we muſt not forget that the ſtrength of our Nature is ſoon broken if it be always ſtrained, and the fineſt parts are ſoon tired and diſpirited if they be inceſſantly imployed; That Man has a deſign to carry on far nobler and more important than this of *Civil Buſineſs*, and that ſo far at leaſt the Pleaſures of Life are to be mingled with its Toils and Troubles, as to enable us the better to undergo them; Therefore,

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The Gentleman's Time ought not to be ſo wholly taken up in Buſineſs, as not to leave Vacancies for *Religion*, *Meditation*, *Friendſhip*, and *Diverſion*. They are two extreams fatal to Happineſs, to have no Buſineſs at all, or ſo much as leaves no room for Books or Friends, for *Meditation* or neceſſary *Diverſion*; for this makes Life very barren and very dull, it makes Buſineſs meer Drudgery, and places the great Man in a more toilſome condition than the mean One, and makes him wiſh for the Eaſe of his Tenants and Servants. Nor is this the only Evil of an uninterrupted purſuit of wordly Buſineſs; but what is worſe, it extinguiſhes all guſt of Vertue, all reliſh of heavenly things, and inſtead of the Courage and Peace, with which Religion inſpires Men, it leaves them without any rational Support or Comfort, either conſuming with perplexed and anxious Thoughts about the event of things, or hardened into a neglect, if not contempt of Religion, propoſing to themſelves no other or higher end of Life than the acquitting themſelves well in the ſtation they are, and aſcribing the iſſue of Affairs to no other Providence than ſuch as they are daily

wont

wont to imploy about them, and to ſuch other Accidents as they have obſerved them ever and anon ſubject to.

When I demand a vacant Time for *Religion*, it muſt not be ſuppoſed that I do not look upon Religion as the firſt and greateſt Buſineſs of Humane Life, it being in vain to gain the whole World for him who loſes his Soul, or to be intent in preſerving or advancing the Peace and Welfare of the Publick, for him whoſe Mind is filled with Diſorder and Guilt; I do therefore ſuppoſe all the Actions of the Day, ſo conducted, as to become Inſtances of Chriſtian Virtue; I ſuppoſe Juſtice and Integrity, Courage and Bounty, Patience and Gentleneſs, mingling themſelves in the diſcharge of every *Civil Buſineſs*. And then the Religion for which I demand ſome vacant Moments, is that of publick and private Devotion, without which it is impoſſible for the great Man either to preſerve Reputation without, or Peace within. Publick Devotion is not only an Act of Worſhip due to God, but, in a Gentleman, a Teſtimony of the Honour which he has for the Community he is of, and an expreſſion of Charity towards thoſe who

are

are influenced by his Example. Nor is private Devotion leſs neceſſary than publick, not only becauſe publick without private degenerates into Formality, into a meer ſhew without the Power of Godlineſs; nor yet becauſe every Man's Reputation flows firſt from his Domeſticks, who can have no great veneration for him, who appears to have none for his God, thô even theſe Reaſons ought not to be contemned, but eſpecially becauſe every Man has particular Wants and particular Obligations, and none more than the great One; and therefore muſt offer up to God his particular Petitions and Prayers. I cannot therefore tell how to think, that he who does not begin and cloſe the Day with Prayers to God, can believe there is one; he that does not invoke Providence, ſeems to defie it; and he who ſacrificeth not to God, ſeems to me to ſacrifice only to his own Nets.

As to *Meditation*, 'tis ſo eſſential a part of *Religion*, and ſo indiſpenſable a preparative for Devotion, that I ſhould not have placed it here by it ſelf, did I not extend its Deſign ſomething further. *Meditation* is that *Act*, which of all others, does moſt delight and nouriſh the Mind,

Mind, which, of all others, is moſt fit to raiſe and to ſtrengthen it. In other Actions we ſeem to move mechanically, in this alone rationally. In all other, our Reaſon ſeems confined and fettered by, I know not what Preſcriptions, Cuſtoms, and Circumſtances; in this alone it ſeems to enjoy its native Freedom and Liberty, rambling with an uncontrouled Impetus, and with delight ſtretching and dilating it ſelf. In all other things, the Mind ſeems to be impreſſed and moulded by the Matter and Buſineſs about which it is converſant; but in this it gives what Forms and Circumſtances it pleaſes to both; in this it has a kind of creative or productive Power, and I know not what ſort of Deſpotick Sovereignty. In a word, he who is ignorant of the force of *Meditation*, is a Stranger to the trueſt Pleaſure of Humane Life, to the moſt uſeful taking and Natural Act of the Humane Soul. But I forgot what I mainly intended, which was to tell you that the uſe of *Meditation* conſiſts either in Reflection or Preparation, as regarding alike yeſterday and to morrow; 'Tis highly neceſſary that he looks back upon his day paſt, who lies under ſo many Temptations

ptations to waſte it, that he whoſe Actions are of ſo much greater importance than thoſe of private Men, and fall unavoidably under a more general and ſevere Cenſure, do the more carefully ſcan them over. Nor is Preparation leſs neceſſary than Reflection, for this gives order to your Affairs, and forms the Mind into a fit and juſt *Diſpoſition*; it prevents Surprizes, removes Difficulties, and gives beauty and ſteadineſs to your whole Conduct.

As to *Friendſhip* and *Diverſion*, I ſhall treat of them fully in their proper places, and therefore ſhall ſpeak but a word of them here. 'Tis a hard matter, it may be, for great Men to have ſincere Friends, but this being a Purchaſe of ſo great a value, deſerves they ſhould lay out all their Art and Intereſt upon it; for beſides the advantage of *Friendſhip* in every Condition, that it cleares our Notions, corrects our Errors, confirms our Virtues, enlarges our Joys, and leſſens our Troubles; it is to Men in an eminent Station more peculiarly neceſſary, both as the Ornament and Support of their Fortune.

As to *Diverſion*, it ever muſt be ſuch as may conſiſt with the Dignity of the Perſon.

Perſon, or the urgency of his Employment, ſuch as may not leſſen his Character, or waſte his Time; ſuch as may refreſh and recruit Nature, and from which he may return to his Buſineſs with new Vigour and new Appetite; and it were very well, if Diverſions were ſo wiſely contrived, that they might at once delight and improve the Mind: I ſhould therefore think that Phyſick or Husbandry, the Principles of any curious Mechanick Performances, Muſick, Architecture, and ſuch like, might be proper Entertainments of vacant hours: But if the Health of the Body, as well as Pleaſure of the Mind be aimed at in *Diverſion*, it were well to have always ready ſome Wiſe Friends, by whoſe Help and Converſation, the Time you beſtow upon the Health of the Body, may not be utterly loſt to the Mind.

I am ſenſible I have been guilty in this Diſcourſe of the ſame Fault which all, who write Morals with any Spirit, do generally fall into; that is, propoſing a greater Perfection than is commonly attainable, and of forming my Models and Idea's rather by Speculation than the Practice of Mankind; but this will be eaſily

eaſily pardon'd by ſuch as remember that the Copy will ever fall ſhort of the Original, and that Men will eaſily of themſelves bend and accommodate the exacteſt Rule to the Frailties and Imperfections of Humane Life. Nor do I again forget, when I preſs Gentlemen to the nobleſt heights of Virtue, that they are expoſed to more numerous and more violent ſolicitations to Vice than other Men, I know it; but at the ſame time, I remember too, that they always pretend to a higher Spirit, and a more refined Education; That their Virtue always ſhines with a double Luſtre, its own, and that of their Fortune; ſo that moderate Attainments in them make a greater ſhew than the more perfect and accompliſhed in Men of a lower Sphere; and finally, that thoſe Advantages and Prerogatives which they enjoy by their Birth and Station, do put them in a better Condition than other Men, to defend their true Liberty, and to purſue thoſe Methods which Reaſon and Virtue dictate.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the Trading or Negotiating Life.

Sect. 1. *Rules relating to Succeſs in Trade. Firſt, That the Trader be Induſtrious. Secondly, That he be not above his Profeſſion.*

Sect. 2. *Rules relating to his* Religion. *Firſt, The Trade muſt be a lawful one. Secondly, It muſt be managed with Juſtice, Truth, and Charity. Thirdly, It muſt not interfere with Religion. Fourthly, The Trader ought to propoſe to himſelf wiſe and rational* Ends, *ſuch as are a* Competency *for himſelf and Family: The charitable Aſſiſtance of others: A timely Retirement or Retreat from the buſtle and diſtractions of too much Buſineſs.*

MY latter Years have been ſpent moſtly among the Trading part of Mankind, and I have received many Obligations from them, and I think my ſelf bound to do them this right, to let the World know, that I have found more *Honour* and *Gratitude*, more *Clearneſs* and *Integrity* amongſt this ſort of Men, than

I ever could amongſt others, whoſe Quality and Education raiſed my Expectations higher; it will be therefore no ſmall ſatisfaction to me, if any Endeavours of mine, can render them any conſiderable Service.

There is no Condition of Life free from Temptations and Difficulties, apt to embroil our Happineſs, and infect our Innocence, and therefore neither this of *Traders*; The Evils they are ſubject to may be reduced to Two Heads, their miſcarrying in *Trade*, or in *Religion*. I will therefore begin with ſuch Rules as may ſerve to prevent the former, and then proceed to ſuch as concern the latter.

If we trace the Ruine of ſuch as fail or break, back to its Original, we ſhall find it generally to be either *Idleneſs* or *Pride*. *Idleneſs*, the Parent of all Sottiſh Vices; *Pride*, the Parent of expenſive Follies and ruinous Projects. I will therefore lay down theſe Two Rules as the Foundations of the *Trader*'s Secular Proſperity. *Firſt*, That he muſt be diligent and Induſtrious. *Secondly*, That he muſt not be above his Profeſſion.

1. He muſt be *Diligent* and *Induſtrious*. You ſeem born for *Induſtry*; and though ſome

ſome pretend to be ſent into the World only to enjoy a Fortune; 'Tis plain you are firſt to raiſe one; and tho there may be ſome fortunate Men in the World, that ſeem to thrive rather by Chance than Virtue, and owe more to the Care of others than their own; yet, I am ſure, in the ordinary Methods of *Providence*, *Diligence* and *Induſtry* are the High-way to *Wealth* and *Plenty*; *Virtue* and *Sobriety*, to wiſe and ſecure Enjoyments. And I know not with what Confidence Men can promiſe themſelves the Bleſſing and Favour of God on any other terms. He has made nothing on purpoſe to be idle and uſeleſs: The Heavenly Bodies never ceaſe to yield their Light and Influence, nor the Terreſtial ones their Fruit. We our ſelves do ſubſiſt by a continual Motion; and ſhould our Blood and Spirits grow dull and ſluggiſh, our Life muſt needs expire with their Activity; *Man is born to labour as the Sparks fly upward*; our Capacities and Endowments deſtine and urge us to it, the neceſſities and want of this needy beggerly ſtate, (in which Nature, how kind ſoever it was to the Golden Age, does not furniſh us with any thing, without *Art* and *Induſtry*) exact and de-

mand it, and the Laws of Humane Society oblige us to it; for it is but fit that every one ſhould contribute his ſhot for the Entertainment of the Publick, and that he ſhould not, like a Droan, be feaſted and maintained by the labour and travel of others. And ſo far, laſtly, is Chriſtianity from abrogating this Law of Nature, that it earneſtly inforces it, *Let ours learn to maintain good Works for neceſſary uſes, that they be not unfruitful*; that is, that they be not a ſhame and burden to themſelves and Families, to the Commonwealth or Chriſtian Profeſſion. Propoſe not then, I addreſs my ſelf here to Apprentiſes and Biginners; propoſe not to exempt your ſelves from that Univerſal Law of Labour and Travel to which the whole Creation is ſubjected; you eſpecially who lie under more immediate and particular Obligations to it. 'Tis an unaccountable folly for one, who is to make his Fortune in the World, to apply himſelf to *Trade*, rather as a *Diverſion* than Buſineſs, and to deſign it only as a Support and Fund for Sloth and Luxury: 'Tis Madneſs and Phrenſie in any one to propoſe to be Maſter of his Time 'ere he be Maſter of his *Trade*, and to indulge

dulge his Pleaſures before he has made Proviſion to defray the Expence of them, and yet this, I doubt, is too too general a practice; whereas would young Men conſider the Matter aright, they would find that they do but prevent their Pleaſures by gathering of them before they be ripe, and do but make their Troubles and Vexations endleſs, by indulging their Eaſe and Lazineſs too ſoon. Contradictious Projects! To propoſe at once to live idly, and yet to thrive! To live pleaſurably, and grow rich! 'Tis true, there are many *Traders*, who live in much Eaſe and Plenty, and make a very handſome Figure in the World, and 'tis but fit there ſhould be ſuch: *Trade* is the Support and Ornament of Kingdoms, and no Man of Senſe will any more envy the Man of *Trade* his Wealth, than the Man of the Sword his Honour, or the Man of Letters and Abilities his Places and Preferments: But if I could, I would have Men grow up to all theſe by Labour and Induſtry, by an Apprentiſhip of Sobriety and Virtue; I would have Enjoyment be the Reward of Merit; I would not have Eaſe and Pleaſure be raviſhed by the Looſe and Unworthy, but

regularly poſſeſſed by ſuch as have taken pains to purchaſe both, and have Senſe, Experience, and Virtue enough to enjoy them.

Secondly, The *Trader* muſt not be above his Calling. Pride and Vanity are generally ſworn Enemies, both to the Content and Proſperity of Traders; but then it muſt be remembred ſome are but lightly tinged, others more throughly and deeply died with theſe Vices; in ſome they produce only little Comical Affections, and almoſt Innocent Excurſions; but in others very fatal Diſorders and Irregularities. There is no gracefulneſs in any Motion that is not natural; a Man of low Stature may add ſomething to his Height, but nothing to his Comelineſs, by ſtrutting upon Stilts. Nor is there only an ungracefulneſs, but an uneaſineſs in all affected Motions; we are all a little purblind and dim-ſighted in this World, and therefore walk more ſecurely in the ways we are accquainted with; but for my part, when an Error is only Comical, and expoſes Men no further than to a little Raillery and Cenſure, 'tis ſcarce worth my while to preſcribe to it; and I cannot tell whether it be worth every Man's while

while to be at the Charge of Correcting a Humour, which if it do a little expoſe him, does yet pleaſe him too; the Pride and Ambition which I would extirpate, is ſuch a one as I have obſerved fatal to the *Trades-man*'s Fortune and Repoſe; ſuch as tempts him to deſpiſe and neglect his Trad, or puts him upon Expences which it cannot maintain, or ingages him in bold or hazardous Projects; this is an Error which I would fain reform, and methinks a few ſober Reflections ſhould here prevail: What? can it be ſenſe to make a ſhew abroad at the Expence of your Content and Peace at home? What, is it not much better to be modeſt and ſafe, to be humble and at eaſe, than to ſuffer daily anxieties and perplexities, and to have your Mind always upon the rack, how to anſwer and ſatiſie the Importunities of Pride and Vanity? 'Tis worſe yet, when a ſhort piece of Pageantry ends in perpetual Infamy, when this importent Humour is nouriſhed by Robbery and Injuſtice, by Fraud and Cheat committed upon Widows and Orphans, Acquaintance and Friends, and the neareſt Relations. I muſt confeſs, I am amazed to think that any ones Pride ſhould be tick-

led by a falſe and fatal Grandeur, upheld only by Wrong and Injuſtice, and reſolving in a moment into indelible ſhame and unretrievable Ruine. For my part, I ſhould in this caſe look upon Bravery, not as the Marks of Greatneſs, but Ornaments of a *Sacrifice*; not as the Pomp of a Triumph, but a Funeral; and my luſcious Morſels, how pleaſing ſoever to my Palate, would be ready to riſe and recoil in my *Stomach*. As to thoſe who ſeem to ſcorn their Profeſſion, I have but this to ſay, Let them find out a more thriving one before they leave the old one, before they deſert the Profeſſion they were bred to for its meanneſs, let them make ſure of a more Honourable Employment, or elſe the ſcorn they load their Trade with, will be want of *Senſe*, not Greatneſs of *Spirit*; a lazy Pride, not a generous Ambition; and if ſo, I am ſure there is no Profeſſion ſo mean as that of Sloth and Looſneſs.

Sect. 2. The ſecond ſort of Rules are ſuch as concern the *Religion* of the *Trader* or *Artiſan*; for 'tis to little purpoſe that he thrive in his Secular, if he run out in his Chriſtian Calling, for this is but to be fortunate, and yet miſerable. Therefore,

Firſt,

First, He muſt be ſure that his Calling be lawful.

Secondly, That it be carried on with Truth, Juſtice, and Charity.

Thirdly, That his Attendance on the Buſineſs of this World, do not extinguiſh his Concern for a better, and his *Trade* devour his *Religion*, as *Pharaoh*'s lean Kine did the fat ones.

Fourthly, That he propoſe to himſelf *proper* and *rational Ends* of *Trading*.

First, He muſt be ſure that his Calling be lawful; that is, ſuch as is neither forbidden by any Law of God, or the Magiſtrate, nor does in its own Nature Miniſter to Vice. But that I may not perplex Mens Minds with unneceſſary Scruples, and tempt them to doubt of the lawfulneſs of all *Trades*, that are any way made the Inſtruments of Sin and Folly; you muſt know ſome things miniſter to Sin directly and neceſſarily, others only accidentally, and not by the immediate Intention of the *Artiſt* or *Trader*, but the abuſe of others. The former ſort of Traders are unlawful in themſelves, and no pretence can ſanctifie the uſe of them; he that directly and immediately miniſters to a Sin, communicates

nicates in the guilt of it, as he that purveys for the Luſt of others, partakes of the ſin of the Adulterer and Fornicater; but thoſe which Miniſter not purpoſely and immediately, but accidentally, are yet in themſelves lawful; nor ſhall the Trader communicate in thoſe Abuſes to which the Luſts and Vanities of others proſtitute them: Thus Taverns are not unlawful, becauſe abus'd by Intemperance, nor are all Shops of Clothing to be ſhut, becauſe thence People furniſh themſelves with ſuch things as inflame their Immodeſty and Pride; the Reaſon is plainly this, becauſe the ſin may be ſeparated from the Trade; that Wine, whoſe full Draughts are by ſome made uſe of to the defacing Reaſon, and enkindling Luſt, may as well refreſh the weary and delight the moderate; thoſe Garments which adorn the Proud and Wanton, may be made uſe of to add a Luſtre to Greatneſs. The Inconvenience would be inſufferable, if every Profeſſion which did but indirectly and caſually adminiſter to Vice, were therefore ſinful; the Courts of Juſtice muſt be laid aſide, becauſe oftentimes the Bar and Bench have contributed to oppreſs, injure, and rob in form

of

of Law. The Pulpit muſt be for ever ſilenced, becauſe Men have ſometimes ſown the Seeds of Sedition and Slavery from hence. All the *Arts*, either of War or Peace, have ſometimes ſerved the Cruelty of the one, and Luxury of the other, and by conſequence would be baniſhed out of all Commonwealths. Yet here it muſt be confeſſed, that the more or leſs tendency any Trade hath to the promoting Vice, it is in the ſame proportion the more or leſs eligible. And that it imports Men, who love their *Peace* and *Happineſs* more than gain, not to debauch their Callings themſelves, by proſtituting them to Extravagances and Exorbitances, and projecting Profit from the Intemperances and Sins, that is, the Ruine of others; for 'tis not ſufficient to the Peace and Comfort of a Man's Mind that his calling be innocent, if his Conduct of it be not ſo too.

Secondly Trade ought to be managed with *Truth*, *Juſtice*, and *Charity*; for without theſe 'tis only a more cleanly Art of Cheating or Oppreſſion; Sins which I doubt can receive but little excuſe or mitigation from the Cuſtom and Practice of them: Without theſe, *Trade* cannot

cannot be regular and eaſie, nor Gain comfortable and delightful, ſince no Man can have any Confidence in the protection of God, when the Methods of his thriving are ſuch as merit Vengeance, not a Bleſſing; nor can I ſee any thing that can betray Men into Lying and Knavery, but the want of true Senſe, as well as true Faith, ſince thô many by undue ways have more ſuddenly enriched themſelves, yet 'tis evident that the Wealth which is more regularly purchaſed is more pleaſant, durable, and laſting; and that honeſt and equitable Dealing is the ſureſt, if not the ſpeedieſt way to Wealth. Nor are there, I believe, many Inſtances of Men, who if they underſtood their Buſineſs, have ever ſuffered much by their Uprightneſs and Integrity in Dealing, it being very hard to imagine, that a *Trader* ſhould be a Loſer by thoſe Virtues which advance Credit and Reputation: But however this be, I am not now inquiring after Wealth, but *Happineſs*, to the obtainment of which I am very poſitive that the obſervation of theſe Meaſures is indiſpenſible, ſince the contrary muſt needs pervert the Mind, and intangle Life; and as they extinguiſh in the

the Soul all Sparks of *Honour* and Greatneſs, ſo muſt they its Courage and Confidence, Tranquillity and Peace, which can reſult from nothing but the due Moderation of our Affections, and the Conſcience of our Integrity.

Thirdly, The *Trader*'s Attendance on his Calling muſt not diſcharge him from his attendance on *Religion*. 'Tis true, 'tis commonly ſaid, and generally admitted, that the Duty of every ones Secular Calling is a part of *Religion*, but this ought to be well underſtood, that ſo neither a Veneration for Religion breed a neglect of your Callings, nor an over-fond Opinion of the Merit of Induſtry in your Calling, as if all Virtue were compriſed in it, breed a Contempt of Religion; 'Tis fit therefore to put you in mind, that Arts and Trades have not in themſelves any direct or immediate tendency, either to the improvement of Reaſon, or the production of Virtue, they Miniſter to the Neceſſities of this World, not the Glories of another; nor are they ſo much the Works of a Rational and Spiritual, as of a Mortal and Indigent Being; from whence it follows, that thô they are neceſſary to the preſent ſtate of things,

things, yet can they deſerve to employ you no longer than either the publick Benefit or private Convenience require it, and that you are then only wiſely taken up about theſe, when neither your Endowments nor Fortunes capacitate you for a Life more immediately and directly ſerviceable to the purpoſes of Reaſon and Revelation; and finally, that the Works of a Secular Profeſſion are then only acceptable Sacrifices to God, when conſecrated by Wiſe Principles and Virtues cleaving to and mingling with them. Do not therefore think that a Pretence of Buſineſs can Cancel your Obligations to the Duties of Chriſtianity. If a Man could fancy, which I never can, Buſineſs and Religion incompatible, 'tis evident which were to be preferred, ſince if the will of God were ſo, it is much better to be ſtarved than to be damned: But without carrying the Matter ſo far, 'tis plain that Virtue and *Religion*, with a competency, render Men abundantly more happy than Wealth can do, if attended with the neglect or contempt of either; 'Tis the riches of the Mind makes Men great and happy; The Ignorant and Irreligious can never be either. Let no Man therefore

fore think that he ſuffers any Damage, if he be forced to maintain his Virtue and Religion by the diminution of his *Trade*, thô I cannot comprehend that there can be a neceſſity of this, for I have never yet obſerved any Man ſo oppreſſed and over-charged with Buſineſs, as not to find time for Pleaſure, when he has pretended he could find none for Religion. In a word, the neglect of Religion is capable of no excuſe, not only becauſe your future, but preſent Happineſs, depends upon it; Modeſty or Moderation to curb a vain and ambitious thirſt of Wealth; Faith or Confidence in the Providence of God, to reſtrain you from mean, baſe, and unlawful Courſes; Self-reſignation to prevent anxiety, and thoſe fears to which the Uncertainties, Changes, and Revolutions of Times and Trade make Men ſubject, ſeem to me as neceſſary to the Peace and Happineſs of a *Trader*, as a competent Stock, Induſtry or Skill, can be to his Worldly Succeſs or Proſperity; and though Men, who allow themſelves no time, either for Attendance upon Publick Religion, or Private Meditation, may talk finely of theſe Virtues by way of Notion and Speculation; It is impoſ-

ſible

ſible they ſhould be really poſſeſſed of them; *How can he get Wiſdom that holdeth the Plough, and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth Oxen, and is occupied in their labours, and whoſe talk is of Bullocks?* which the Author of *Eccleſiaſticus*, by a parity of Reaſon, extends further to all *Traders* and *Artiſans*, who are in like manner wholly taken up in their Art. I could therefore wiſh that thoſe Words of our Saviour, *What ſhall it profit a Man, if he ſhall gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul*, were writ in Capital Letters in the moſt conſpicuous place of the Counting-Houſe, and the Shop, that you might ever and anon be put in mind, that there is one thing more neceſſary, even than the diligent and proſperous management of your Trade, namely Religion; for to what purpoſe is it that your Books are well kept, that there is order and regularity in the whole Conduct of your Trades, if at the ſame time your neglected Hearts lie like the Field of the Sluggard, waſte and open, and over-grown with Briers and Thorns and Weeds; or like a confuſed and intangled Stock of an unskilful Trader, which waſtes and decays each day? To what purpoſe is it

that

that you be punctual Dealers towards Men, if you be Bankrupts towards God? To what purpose is it that you have Credit and *Honour* upon the Change, if you be poor and beggarly, shameful and sneaking in your selves within, having your Souls destitute of any true Peace, Wealth, or Courage, and you shift the Accusations and Importunities of Conscience, as much as a wretched Debtor would a severe and inexorable Creditor? Ah! while you pursue the World, forget not that there is a Heaven; and while you make Provision for Time, make some too for Eternity; let your stating your Accompts with Men, put you in mind of clearing your Accompts with God; and let these two Things never be out of your Thoughts, first, That it is God who gives Man Power to get Wealth; and next, That 'tis not a clear Estate, but a clear Soul, that makes Man happy, I mean a Soul freed from silly and vile Affections, and enriched with a Knowledge and Love of God and Goodness.

Fourthly, The *Trader* must propose to himself proper and rational Ends of *Trading*: For whoever proposes to himself vain and false ones, will entangle

his Life in manifold Troubles and Temptations, and loſe his *Reaſon*, *Religion*, and *Tranquillity*, in the Windings and Mazes of wretched Fancies, and unaccountable Projects. Theſe *Ends* of Trading I take to be theſe Three: *Firſt*, A competent and honeſt Support of your ſelves and Families. *Secondly*, A charitable Succour and Relief of others. *Thirdly*, A timely Retreat from a Secular Calling, to a Contemplative Life.

Firſt, a competent and honeſt Support of your ſelves and Families: This end is pointed out by the Apoſtle, *Tit.* 3.14. and called *Neceſſary Uſes*; *i. e.* We muſt deſign in *Trade* the Support of the Neceſſities, not Luſts of Nature. And were not all *Trades* over-ſtocked, and conſequently the Obſervation ſuperfluous, I ſhould tell you that publick as well as private Neceſſities, were here to be underſtood. Nor is your Care here limitted to your own Neceſſities only, but thoſe alſo of your Children and Poſterity demand their ſhare in it; but then, leſt under this Pretence you extend your Deſires beyond all Bounds, you are to remember, that in reſolving the Meaſures of this Proviſion, you are not to take

take Counſel of your own Ambition, or the wanton Expectations of your Children; that Proviſion for them is wiſeſt, which lays a ſufficient Foundation for their Induſtry to build on, and leaves them under an Obligation to Buſineſs and Employment. And is not this enough? To what purpoſe ſhould Men toil, cark, and pinch, to make their Families Rich and Great, that is, Lazy and Wanton, to leave behind them an Eſtate which their own Example proves more than neceſſary; for moſt of thoſe that do ſo, have made little uſe of it themſelves? Miſtake me not, I do not think it unlawful to be Rich, or to leave one's Family ſo; but I think it fooliſh and ſinful too, to ſacrifice the Peace of one's Mind, and the Eaſe of one's Life, to the Luſt of Riches: I think it ſilly and vicious to raiſe a Family by Meanneſs and Sordidneſs, or to lay the Foundation of Children's Greatneſs in one's own Infamy. In ſhort, 'tis not Wealth, but an inordinate Paſſion for it which I condemn; Proſperity is the Gift of God, a common Reward of Chriſtian Virtues; for Chriſtianity is ſaid to *have the Promiſes of this Life, and that which is to come.*

Wealth then may be receiv'd, but it muſt not be deſign'd as your firſt and chief End. Thus *Fame*, *Honour*, and *Power*, are great Bleſſings and Favours of Heaven; but whoever immoderately thirſts after the one or the other, is ambitious and vain-glorious. You may receive Temporal good Things with Gratitude, and enjoy them with Moderation; but if you dote upon them, you violate the Vow of your Baptiſm, and virtually renounce your Faith: For would not this be to forget that Heaven were your Kingdom and Country, and Earth the Place of your *Exile*, or at beſt, Pilgrimage? This is a Leſſon can never be too often inculcated, not only on the account of that violent Oppoſition 'tis almoſt every where encountred with, but alſo the vaſt Importance 'tis of, to the quiet and contentment of a Trading Life: This one thing is the Philoſophy the Trader ſhould be ever ſtudying, the Wiſdom he ſhould be daily purſuing; that is, a true and juſt Moderation of his Deſires of Wealth. Did Man know how to bound his Deſires by the Neceſſities or Conveniences of Humane Life; could he regulate his Appetites by the Modeſty and Moderation

tion of Chriſtianity, not by Cuſtom and Fancy, I am confident this one thing alone would reſcue him from the far greater part of Evils and Incumbrances which infeſt Humane Life: Vanity and Ambition, Envy and Emulation, Wantonneſs and Fancy, create moſt of theſe Difficulties and Neceſſities which ſtain the Beauty, diſturb the Peace and Order, and deſtroy the Pleaſure of Life. When Men's Deſires and Aims are too big for their Callings, they are unavoidably plunged into Diſcontent and doubtful Projects; and if they ſink not finally into Ruin, they cannot be held up but by ſuch an anxious and reſtleſs Proſecution of the World, as looks rather like Hurry or Diſtraction, than *Trade* or Employment. I can therefore never think a *Tradeſman* happy, till he has Modeſty enough to find content in the revenue of a moderate and eaſie Trade; till he underſtands what are the bounds his Nature and his Station ſets him; and thô he know how to enjoy a great Fortune, does never want one; has Senſe enough to uſe it, and Vertue enough not to let his Happineſs depend upon it.

Secondly, A charitable Succour and Relief of others. 'Tis confeſſed by all,

that Men are born, not for themſelves only, but for others too; and God, the Diſpenſer of Temporal Wealth, commands ſuch as are rich in this World, to be rich in good Works too; but it is always to be provided, That Juſtice to firſt take place, and then Charity. This Direction therefore ſuppoſes the *Trader*'s Accompts to ſtand fair; it ſuppoſes him to have diſcharged the Duties which he owes to his Relatives and Dependants, or elſe to have none. I will not inſiſt on the Obligation or Pleaſure of Charity; I will not preſs you to it by the Intereſt of your preſent or future *Happineſs*; for the truth is, to do right to the *Trading* World, there is no Rank or Order of Men in the Kingdom, that is more ſenſible of the Duty of Charity, or more inclined and diſpoſed to it; none that give more eminent Proofs of it while living, or leave more glorious Monuments of it behind them. One thing only I will take upon me to recommend to you; that is, the Advice of *Solomon*; *Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom, in the grave whither thou goeſt*: That is, whatever Good you deſign to do,

do, do it ſpeedily, and as much as in you lies, be your own Executors. How often are excellent Purpoſes ſtrangled in the Birth by an unexpected Death! How frequently are they perverted by the Corruption and Negligence of thoſe to whoſe Inſpection they are committed! Beſides, this way you ſhall reap the Fruit of your own Plantations, you will enjoy the Pleaſure and Satisfaction reſulting from the Perfection, Beauty, and good Contrivance of the Foundations you have laid, or you will be able to ſupply the Defects, or correct the Errors of your Model, and prevent thoſe future Miſcarriages which ſuch Deſigns are liable to. Tho' all this be very much, yet it is but the leaſt part of what you will reap from being your ſelves the Executors of your own Bounty, you will be ſure that you dedicate it to Charity, not to Vanity; that you are building Alms-houſes for the Living, not Tombs and Pyramids for the Dead; you will eſcape the common Cheat and Impoſture the Rich put upon themſelves, while they entangled themſelves in Covetouſneſs all their Lives, under pretence of deſigning mighty Things after Death.

Thirdly, The *Tradeſman* ought to propoſe to himſelf a timely Retreat, *i. e.* if the Neceſſities of this indigent State will give way to it; which ſeems to me natural, to finiſh Buſineſs e're we finiſh Life; to lay down our Burden e're we tire and fall under the weight of it; and quit troubleſome Employments, before our bungling diſcharge of them proclaim the decay of our Parts and Strength, and the increaſe of our Avarice and Ambition: Nay, the very continuance of the ſame Cares for the World, which looked before like Prudence, will in old Age be reckoned Sin and Folly: To *Trade*, is but to make Proviſion for Life; and therefore ſince common Senſe will tell us, that we muſt not be always providing for Life, and never live; 'tis plain Men ought, if they may, at length break off their Trade, or at leaſt ſo contract it, that it may be rather Diverſion than Travail; as *Solomon* ſends us to the Ants to learn Induſtry, ſo might he to learn Wiſdom too; the Enjoyment of their Treaſure in the Winter being no leſs an inſtance of the one, than their Labour in laying it up in the Summer, of the other. Beſides, in ripe years, the Advice of the Prophet ſeems

ſeems to be addreſſed to every Man, *Set thy Houſe in order, for thou ſhalt ſurely die, and not live*; *i. e.* ſtate your Accompts, ſettle your Fortune, compoſe the Differences of your Family, and fix your Children, ſo that you may be able to diſcern what courſe they will ſteer when you are gone, and to correct any Error they are apt to fall into, while you live, which may otherwiſe, when you are dead, prove incorrigible and deſtructive. If theſe Motives, taken from Decency, Prudence, and Mortality, ſeem too light, there is another of more weight and moment behind, that is, the Conſideration of your Eternal Intereſt. 'Tis highly neceſſary to leave the World before you be torn from it, and to acquaint your ſelves more familiarly with another World, before you paſs into it to make your abode in it for ever. Certainly it requires ſome time to prepare the Soul for Death and Judgment; and that Man will be very unfit for either, who is carried from the Counter to the Grave, and from the Intanglements of Secular Cares to the Tribunal of God. But beſides the Benefits which you will find in Retirement, the Proſpect and Propoſal of it has many

many in it; the hopes of a Sabbatick Year in Life, will eaſe the Weight and Travail of thoſe that precede it; and a Deſign of retreating from Trade and Buſineſs, will be apt to induce Men to paſs their firſt Years with more Moderation and Abſtinence, that they may the ſooner provide the Means of an eaſie or honourable Retirement.

Theſe Rules well obſerved, would free the Negotiating Life from all the great Evils and Inconveniences it is ſubject to. Buſineſs, as it was in the time of Innocence, would be, not the Curſe, but the Bleſſing of Mankind; and Trade would be as eaſie and innocent, if not as pleaſant, as *Adam*'s Husbandry in his Garden; for thus Induſtry would be without Drudgery, and Care without Anxiety; Commerce would be carried on without any mean or ill Artifice, without impatient and tormenting Deſigns, or tireſom and vexatious Diſappointments. What need would there be of Shifts and Equivocatians, of Fraud and Circumvention, if a Man had Faith enough to believe, that God's Bleſſing upon his Induſtry, were the only way to grow truly rich, I mean to get, if not ſo much as he would,

yet

yet as much as would be good for him? What Temptation would Men lie under to Bondage and Drudgery, or to Perplexity and Anxiety, if he could contain his Deſires within thoſe narrow Bounds which Nature and his Station have preſcribed him? What Fears could diſquiet the Mind, which were formed into an entire Reſignation to, and Dependance upon God? Or how could the World inſnare that Soul which allots a proper time for Publick Religion, and Private Meditation? In a Word, theſe Rules being followed, Men would not only avoid the common Rocks on which the Happineſs and Fortune of the *Trader* generally daſhes, but alſo attain the end of this ſort of Active Life; they would get Eſtates in their younger years, and enjoy them in their riper; nay, no portion of Life would want its proper and ſeaſonable Enjoyments; they would in the midſt of Buſineſs preſerve their Innocence, and when they did retire from it, they would perfect that Religion which they could before but begin, and enrich, and adorn, and entertain the Soul, which they could but guard and defend before, and ſcarcely maintain in Life, I mean Spiritual Life.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of a Contemplative Life.

For whom this Chapter is deſigned; what kind of Life is to be underſtood by a Contemplative one. Sect. 1. *The Ends or Reaſons warranting the Choice of ſuch a Life; First*, Enjoyment; *Secondly*, Self-preſervation *from the Aſſaults of* Temptation; *Thirdly, The better ſerving the* World; *Fourthly, A more entire Dedication of one's ſelf to* God. Sect. 2. *The Conditions, or Qualifications neceſſary to a* Contemplative Life; *First, A* Plentiful Fortune; *Secondly, A* Peaceable and Humble Diſpoſition; *Thirdly, A* Good Underſtanding. Sect. 3. *The Regulation of a* Contemplative Life; *with reſpect, First, To* Time; *Secondly, To* Place; *Thirdly, To the* Exerciſe *or* Employment of a Retired Life. *The Concluſion, containing the Pleaſure and Happineſs of a* Contemplative Life.

THE firſt thing that offered it ſelf to my Thoughts, taking a view of this Subject, was, the Collegiate Life of Scho-

Scholars in the Univerſities; but beſides, that here they do not ſo much deſign to retire from the World, as to prepare themſelves for it, I had reaſon to think, whatever Service I could propoſe to do the Publick, by any Advice I could here offer, my Zeal could never be able to atone my Preſumption, ſince theſe Seminaries of Learning, are under the Conduct and Direction of the Ableſt, not of this Age only, but of thoſe paſſed: I do not therefore calculate this Diſcourſe for theſe, but for Perſons of another Education, and under no Direction but their own; for ſuch, who make their Retreat from the World, tired and ſated with it; for ſuch, whoſe Inclination or Fortune caſts them upon a quiet, private, and unactive Life: To theſe, I offer my ſelf a Companion; I would enter with them into their Privacies, and aſſiſt them to paſs their Hours with true Pleaſure and Innocence; I would inſpire them, if I could, with wiſe and excellent Thoughts; I would engage them in the moſt neceſſary and moſt delightful Buſineſs of Humane Life, and guard them againſt thoſe Evils and Follies which are apt to inſinuate themſelves into the moſt Solitary Life.

I muſt here, in the next place, repeat an Obſervation which I think I have ſomewhere before made, That the Life of Man muſt neither be wholly Contemplative, nor wholly Active; for as Action and Buſineſs, without any Meditation, is apt to alienate the Mind from God and Virtue, to corrupt all that is great and generous, and truly wiſe in it, and wed it wholly to the World; ſo I doubt a Life ſpent wholly in Contemplation, without any mixture of Action, will prove fruitleſs and unprofitable; and Men condemned to utter Solitude, like the Trees and Shrubs of the Wilderneſs, would grow wild and ſavage, luxuriant in Leaves, but their Fruit, if they brought forth any, four and ſmall. They forget the Nature and the Duty of Man, and talk not Seraphically, but Fantaſtically, whoever perſwade him to give up himſelf entirely to Contemplation: Man is yet a mixt and compound Being, when he becomes all Spirit, let him be all Thought: He is yet a Citizen of this World, tho' he be deſtined for another; let him not forget that there are Virtues becoming him as ſuch; let him live by intuition, when he comes into the perfect Light,

and

and enters into the beatifick Preſence; let him live by Raptures, when he is come into a World where Wants and Frailties, Pains and Evils, cannot enter: In the mean time, let Man content himſelf with Humane Virtue, and in this low probationary State, not dream of the Flights which only Angels take. Having thus taken care, firſt to raiſe no Expectation in my Reader, which might afterwards be fruſtrated; and next, prevented his being betray'd into any Extravagance, by projecting a more abſtracted Life than the Nature of Man and the World will admit, I will now proceed to diſcourſe of theſe three Things:

Firſt, The *Reaſons* and *Ends* of a *Contemplative Life.*

Secondly, The *Neceſſary Qualifications* for it. And,

Thirdly, The due *Regulations* of it.

Firſt, Of the *Reaſons*, &c. Some propoſe to themſelves Eaſe and Enjoyment, as the great End and Deſign of their Retirement; now tho' this be a mean, and low Project, little becoming the Excellence of our Chriſtian Profeſſion, yet I cannot but acknowledge, that it ſeems to

to me an abſurd and irrational thing, to wear out Life in a continual Hurry or Drudgery; and I cannot but think it reaſonable, that Men ſhould one time or other allow Eaſe to the Body, and Quiet to the Mind; ſhould ſet both free from their Servitude to the World, and enjoy the Wealth which they have got together, and eat the Fruit of their Travail and Care: But tho' this be true, yet if Men do quit the Buſineſs, only to give themſelves up to the Pleaſures of the World; if they exchange their Anxiety and Toil for Luxury and Senſuality, and inſtead of being induſtrious, plodding, and thriving Traders, become idle, or, which is worſe, looſe and riotous Country-Gentlemen; this, I muſt confeſs, is but a miſerable Change; this is but to prophane Retirement, abuſe Plenty, and waſte that precious Time which God has made them Maſters of: This, in a word, is not for a Man to quit his Slavery, but to exchange his Maſters; for as to the Intereſt of another Life, and the true end of this, 'tis much the ſame thing, whether a Man be a Servant to Pleaſure and Sloth, or to Covetouſneſs and Ambition. The ſum of this matter is plainly this, 'Tis undoubtedly

edly lawful for ſuch as have been long toiled in the purſuit of the World, to retire and enjoy themſelves and their Friends; nay further, I count them happy, who ſeem born not to ſtruggle and contend with the World, but to enjoy it; but if by Enjoyment be here underſtood, only the gratification of the Humour by outword, tho' innocent Pleaſures, I muſt affirm, That this is too mean, too low, to be the chief End, either of the one's Entrance into the World, or the other's Retreat from it: But if, which is worſe, by *Enjoyment* be here meant growing fat with good Eating and Drinking, or as it were rank and rotten through Eaſe and Sloth, I deny this to be the *Enjoyment* of a Man, much leſs of a Philoſopher or Chriſtian: The *Enjoyment* of a private Life or Philoſophical Receſs, ought to conſiſt in Peace and Order, in Harmony and Exaltation, in a holy Calm and Serenity, in which, as in a clear day, from the top of ſome advantageous height, we *Enjoy* an enlarged and delightful Proſpect; when we look backwards, we behold a wide Sea covered with a vaſt number of all ſorts of Veſſels, toſſed up and down at the mercy of Winds and

Waves, ſome few ſeem to make out with a ſteady Courſe, but are immediately encounter'd with croſs Winds and Storms, a very few indeed, to return in triumph homewards, and of theſe, ſome miſcarrying almoſt in ſight of Port; of all the reſt, a great part, with much toil and difficulty, do ſcarcely live in ſtreſs of Seas and Weather, but the far greater part do ſuffer Wreck, and ſcatter their miſerable Ruins on every Coaſt. But when we look forward, we diſcover a rich and ſecure Country, thinly inhabited indeed, but fill'd with all the Marks of Joy and Victory. But whither will my Imagination lead me; the Enjoyment of the retired, is to conſiſt in the pleaſant Reflections they make on their Eſcape out of a tempeſtuous World, in the Commerce and Entercourſe they maintain with that above; in a calm and leiſurely Survey of all the various and wondrous Works of God, the Works of Grace and Nature; and laſtly, in a very intimate and familiar Acquaintance with themſelves, and the daily habitual practice of pleaſing and perfect Virtues.

Secondly, One true end of *Retirement* may be Self-defence, or Preſervation.

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An Active Life is a ſtate of War, and the World is an Hoſtile Country, Snares and Ambuſhes are laid every where for us, and ever and anon Temptations, worldly and fleſhly Luſts, which St. *Peter* tells us do *War againſt the Soul*, do endeavour either to court and betray us, or to drive and force us into Death and Ruine; therefore, if we be conſcious to our ſelves of our own weakneſs, we have reaſon not to expoſe our ſelves to dangers, which we have not Courage nor Strength enough to vanquiſh; and to chuſe Retirement not as a ſtate of Perfection, but Safety. The Meaſures of Grace, the Strengths of Reaſon, and the Inclinations of Nature, are very different in different Men; whoever therefore, upon the beſt ſurvey he can make of his own Forces, and after ſome, not inſincere Trials, finds himſelf no Match for the World, unable to countermine its Policies, and oppoſe its Power, ſuch a one, if he can, may, nay, I believe ought to retire from the World, as from the face of a too potent Enemy; for tho' War be fuller of Glory, Peace is fuller of Security; and tho' an active and buſie Life be in its ſelf more ſerviceable to the good of Mankind, and

the honour of God, yet in this caſe, a poor Chriſtian may prefer a Contemplative one as the ſecurer; and this is not to decline the Service of God and Man, but Sin and Danger; 'tis not to prefer Eaſe and Security before Spiritual Induſtry and Glory, but before a raſh Preſumption, and a fatal Defeat or Overthrow.

Thirdly, Another End of Retirement may be, to render us more beneficial to the World. The different Talents of different Perſons do ſeem to mark them out, and deſtine them to different ſorts of Life; there are, if I may ſo ſpeak, Active and Contemplative Gifts, and 'tis a great Felicity for any one to be able to know himſelf ſo well, as to diſcern what the God of Nature has deſigned him for: Some, who are a diſgrace to a publick Station, would be an Ornament to a private one; many who act but awkwardly, think and meditate very wiſely and accurately; and ſome, who do but expoſe themſelves in Buſineſs, would paſs very well in Retirement, and prove excellent Examples of Innocence and Virtue, and wonderfully oblige by their good Nature, Sweetneſs, and Charity, all ſuch as ſhould live within the reach

reach of their Influence. None are wont more earneſtly to covet Retirement, than ſuch who are naturally addicted to Learning; Men too plain, or too great for a crafty and ſubtle World, too generous, tender, and eaſie, for a buſtling, vexatious and ſtingy one; theſe are the Men, who when they are Maſters of their wiſhes, ſeem more particularly obliged to dedicate themſelves to ſome eminent Service of the Publick; theſe muſt not bury their Talents, but ripen them in quiet and retirement, like Guardian-Angels, they ſhould procure the honour and happineſs of the Places, which they ſeldom or never appear to; and withdrawing only, not to avoid the Service, but the Foolery of the World, they muſt ever maintain an Active Charity and Compaſſion for thoſe they leave behind, caught and entangled in it; and muſt out of gratitude travel to obtain ſome Bleſſing or other upon that Government, to whoſe Protection they owe the Comforts and Security of their Retreat. But tho' this Direction do more immediately concern ſuch as theſe, that is, Men of Parts, yet ſure there are none utterly exempt from this Obligation of procuring the Publick

Good in there Proportion; who is there ſo deſtitute of the Gifts of Grace, Nature, or Fortune, as to have no Mite to caſt into the Publick Treaſury? He that dares not pretend to attempt the enlightning or reforming the World, can yet adviſe and comfort his ignorant or afflicted Neighbour; he who cannot give Advice at all, may yet gives Alms, which very often is as ſolid and ſubſtantial a Benefit; and he that cannot do this, can yet never be excuſed from Offering up daily Prayers for the Peace and Welfare of his Country, for the Preſervation and Edification of the Church, for the Converſion of Sinners, *&c.* nay, he may proceed to what Particularities he ſhall ſee fit or neceſſary, both in his Petitions and Thankſgivings, and from theſe Interceſſions both the Publick and Private, may, for ought I know, reap more true and valuable Benefit, than from the Works and Labours of the Learned, or from the Alms and Bounty of the Rich. To conclude, he that leads the moſt private and ſequeſtred Life, and is too of the pooreſt Endowments, can yet never be ſuppoſed utterly incapable of rendring any the leaſt Service to others, ſince the ſingle Example

ample of Virtue and Integrity, and the warmth of a pious and edifying Converſation is of the greateſt uſe. Some way or other therefore the moſt ſolitary Life ought to ſerve the Publick, that ſo Retirement may not miniſter to Wantonneſs and Sloth, but Piety and Virtue; and the World may not loſe a Member, but enjoy its Service in its proper Place, and moſt effectual Manner.

Fourthly, the main End of Retirement from the World ſhould be, I think, to dedicate our ſelves more entirely to God. The Philoſopher thought indeed a Contemplative Life the moſt happy one, but thought it too a Bleſſing too great for Mortal Man, too high for this frail Nature, and above the ſtate and condition of this World; he had a great deal of Reaſon on his ſide, yet muſt we preſs on towards that Perfection which we cannot attain; and it is a ſufficient Reaſon for our doing ſo, that we ſhall thus approach nearer to it; thô therefore what ſome Monkiſh Authors have writ of a Solitary Life, equalling almoſt the Duties and Pleaſures of it, to thoſe of an Angelical one, tho' this, I ſay, may ſeem rather holy Romance and Enthuſiaſm, than

grave and ſound Doctrine, yet ſure it cannot be denied, but that the Prophets, the *Nazarites*, and the *Eſſens* amongſt the *Jews*, and many devout and excellent Perſons amongſt the Chriſtians, as well in the pureſt as corrupteſt Ages of the Church, have choſe and coveted Solitude and Deſarts, I mean not uninhabited Places, for that if it were ſo, was an Exceſs and Extravagance, but calm and ſilent Retreats from the Noiſe and Impertinence, from the Hurry and Diſtraction of much Buſineſs and much Acquaintance; and ſince they did ſo, their Examples ſeem to teach us, That this State may be made eminently uſeful to our own good, and God's glory; here a Man ſeems to have little elſe to do, but to praiſe God and improve himſelf, to expiate the Errors of his paſt Life, and to correct and ſubdue whatever he feels amiſs in himſelf at preſent, to perfect and augment his Graces, and to dreſs and adorn his Soul for the Feſtival Solemnities and Triumph of another World: Now he ſeems to have nothing to do, but to begin his Halelujahs, to advance into the Borders and Confines of Heaven by Faith and Devotion, and from the heights of

of Meditation, to ſurvey as from the next advantageous Hill, the Riches and the Pleaſures of that *Canaan* which he ſhall in a moment enter into; and by this method, no doubt of it, as he ſhall enlarge his Appetite and Capacity of Happineſs, ſo ſhall he enlarge his ſhare in it; by this method he ſhall adorn Religion, and repreſent it to the World as moſt lovely and moſt uſeful; he ſhall experiment it to be unſpeakably delightful in it ſelf; he ſhall render the World more eaſie to him, and Heaven more deſirable; and when he comes to the Banks of *Jordan*, that is, of Death, which parts this World from the other, he ſhall find the Streams of it divided to make him way; that is, the Troubles and Terrors of it diſſipated, and he ſhall paſs through it full of humble Gratitude for the Bleſſings of this paſt Life, and raviſhing Hopes and Deſires of thoſe of the future.

Theſe are the proper and rational Ends of withdrawing from the World, tho' I am not ignorant that there may be ſeveral other Inducements to It; ſuch are the digeſting a Diſcontent or Diſgrace, the curing ſome Paſſion which would be otherwiſe nouriſhed by converſing with its

its Object, and the meer escaping from the Troubles and Noise of the World; and as some Men are forced out of their Retreats into the World, not without great Service to the Publick, so are there others, who if they had sense enough to know themselves, or modesty enough to hear the Advice of their Friends, should betake themselves to a private Life, to prevent the Mischiefs in which they are like to involve themselves and others in a Publick one; such are Men of bold and enterprizing Tempers, without Sufficiency; Men of Zeal and Activity, without Understanding. But I designed not here so much to consider what might induce Men to embrace a quiet silent Life, as what Ends they were to propose to themselves when they were in it, which having done, I will pass on to the Second thing.

Sect. 2. The Qualifications which fit Men for a Retired Life; and these are, I think, Three.

First, A plentiful, or at least, competent Fortune.

Secondly, A mild and humble Disposition, or at least, a quiet and composed Mind.

Thirdly, A good Understanding.

First,

Firſt, A plentiful Fortune. 'Tis true, that a Competency is ſufficient to render a retired Life eaſie, and when any one betakes himſelf to it as a Refuge or Sanctuary, againſt the Hoſtilities and Perſecution of Temptations, this is abundantly enough; but where a Contemplative Life is a matter of Choice, not Neceſſity, a plentiful Fortune is of great Uſe, and a great Ornament; it will make the Example of a Man's Virtue ſhine with a clearer Luſtre, and greater Authority; it will enable him to do many Works of Charity, which ſhall have much delight in them, without Toil or Diſturbance; it will furniſh him with all uſeful means of Publick and Private Devotion, and with whatever is neceſſary to enable him to paſs his time both delightfully and rationally. I think I have expreſſed my thoughts clearly; but to prevent all miſtakes, I will add, by a plentiful Fortune, I do not mean a great One, this is more commonly burdenſome, than uſeful to a private Life, and more apt to incumber it, than promote the true Ends of it. In my Retirement, I would have Decency and Order, but not State and Show; I would have comely Plenty, but not a toil-

toilſome Affluence; for the Buſineſs of Solitude is to raiſe the Mind, not to entangle and enſlave it: But the meaſures of this Wealth muſt finally be determined by every Man's own Boſom; for it ought to be proportioned to the Temper and Genius, to the Capacities and Abilities of the Perſon who retires, and to the more immediate Deſign and Ends of his Retirement; and after all, there is no greater ſtreſs to be laid upon this Qualification than this, It is convenient, but not eſſential; tho' a wiſe Man may make an excellent uſe of it, it is not ſo abſolutily and indiſpenſably neceſſary, but that he may be happy without it, both in Publick and Private. For,

Secondly, The Pleaſure and Succeſs of Retirement depends much more upon a Man's Temper and Genius, that it be calm and quiet, that it be meek and humble; and if it be not naturally ſo, it muſt be made ſo; for a proud and ambitious, a reſtleſs and turbulent Perſon, will in vain ſeek for that reſt and repoſe in ſequeſtring himſelf from the World, which is to be found only in the ſubduing his Paſſions, and reforming his Nature: He that is fond of Opinion and Eſteem; He that is

at

at the diſpoſal of Fancy and Humour, and is not able to ſhake off the Yoak of Faſhions and Cuſtoms, will find much to torment him, but nothing to improve or delight him in his Retirement: But on the other hand, the meek and humble Man will find his Garden a Paradiſe, and his Solitude a converſing with God and Heaven; he will enjoy the preſent without any further Proſpect or Ambition; Meditate without any Diſtraction; Worſhip and Praiſe God, as if he had no other Buſineſs, or Deſign; and do all the Good he can in his little Sphere, as if it were the only Pleaſure and Entertainment of the Life he had choſe. 'Tis one of the great Privileges of Retirement, to be able to neglect fantaſtick and imaginary Good, and purſue after that only which is ſolid and ſubſtantial; to be the Maſters of our own Time and Actions, and to model Life by our own Reaſon and Inclinations, not the Fancies and Humours of others. 'Tis the great Advantage of Retirement, that a Man has all the Pleaſure his Soul deſires within his own reach, that all of the World that is grateful to him, is to be found within the Verge of his private Abode; he therefore whoſe Mind

Mind gads abroad, and hankers after Foreign Pleaſures, who is tainted with Envy or Emulation; who hunts after Eſteem, and is diſcompoſed by the Fancy and Cenſures of others, muddies the pure Stream, corrupts and adulterates the true taſt and reliſh of a retired Life; this therefore ought to be the firſt endeavour of him who ſeeks Happineſs in a Retreat; to free his Mind from all thoſe buſie or ambitious Paſſions, which will diſturb his Repoſe, and corrupt his Taſte, and to reduce it to its native Purity and Simplicity, in which it will be able to reliſh the Bleſſing of true Liberty, of eaſie and innocent Pleaſures, of true and artleſs Friendſhip, of regular and undiſturbed Devotion, and finally, of calm and elevated Meditation.

Thirdly, A good Underſtanding is a neceſſary Qualification for Retirement. It requires no little Prudence to guard our ſelves againſt thoſe Evils or Impertinences which will be apt to invade, or inſinuate themſelves into our Solitude; decently to decline Buſineſs, Acquaintance, Ceremonies, Diverſions, I mean ſuperfluous and unneceſſary, which will rob us of our Time and Liberty, and obſtruct us in all the wiſe Ends we propoſe

poſe to our ſelves, is a matter of no ordinary dexterity and addreſs. Nor does it require leſs Underſtanding to preſerve the Peace and Order of a private Family, and yet 'tis in vain to ſhun the Infection that is abroad, if more fatal and ſtubborn Maladies reign at home. Nay further, the Family of the Contemplative Man, ought not only to give him no Diſturbances, but if poſſible, it ought to be moulded and compoſed to his own Humour, and animated by inclinations ſomewhat at leaſt a-kin to his. Nay, after all, let us ſuppoſe the Man ſo intirely ſequeſtred, as to be utterly diſengaged from all other Intereſts but his own, to have no dependance upon any others motion, to have none but himſelf to regard, no other to pleaſe, no other to improve, even here I cannot tell whether ſo abſolute a Liberty do not need the greater Wiſdom to moderate and govern it, and whether it do not require a larger Capacity to find a proper and wiſe Employment, for one whoſe Fortune has tied him to none at all; they are no ordinary Endowments which will enable one looſe and free from all Buſineſs, to ſpend his time profitably and pleaſantly;

and

and yet if he do not, he will be liable to the worſt of Evils; he will diſſolve and putrifie in ſloth, or elſe turn ſour and ſavage, churliſh and brutiſh, through Ignorance, Diſguſt, and Diſcontent; nauſeated with a Life that affords him nothing new, nothing taking: But the Book of Nature lies open to him! 'Tis true, but he cannot read it; 'tis not every vulgar Eye that diſcerns the delicate touches of a skilful Pencil, the curious and ſubtle mixtures of Light and Shade in a well drawn Piece; 'tis not every Spectator can judge of the Beauty, Strength, and Convenience of a well contrived Building. But his Cabinet may be well furniſhed 'tis true, but if the Man have nothing Bookiſh in him, if he have no Genius for Eloquence, no Ear for the Muſick of Wit and Fancy, no Judgment for Hiſtory, no Comprehenſion for Arts or Sciences, what is a Cabinet to him, tho' furniſhed ever ſo well, either for uſe or rarity? 'Tis only fit to be ſhewn, or to ſleep in; for after all the coſt and skill laid out upon it, the Couch is the beſt Furniture in it. But there is Friendſhip! there is; the Name indeed there is, but the Thing is too Divine; a low and grove-

groveling Soul, a dull and impenetrable Temper cannot diſcern the Charms, nor taſte the Sweets of Friendſhip; what is that Familiarity which is incapable of Tenderneſs or Paſſion? What is that Converſation which is incapable of variety, or depth of Wit, or Judgment? But there is Religion, there is Devotion, a boundleſs Field of Profit and Delight! 'tis true; and the Principles of this are plain and ſtrong, able to move the Man of loweſt Capacity to decline Evil, follow his Calling, aud do good in proportion to his Senſe and Ability; but as to Seraphick Contemplative Religion, for this to be the Life and Buſineſs of Man, it requires a vaſt Capacity, raiſed and refined Notion, and little leſs than real Enthuſiaſm; I mean a truly Divine Impetus or Ardour impreſſed or inkindled in the Soul, by the exuberant Influxes of the bleſſed Spirit. In a word, he who in his Retreat is intirely Maſter of himſelf and Time, had need of Talents to imploy and divert him to find him Buſineſs and Pleaſure, and to enable him to reap benefit from the one, and to preſerve his Innocence in the other; and without this degree of Underſtanding, a ſolitary

Life muſt be very dull and barren; nor can I think of any Cure for this, but to increaſe a Man's Task and Buſineſs, in proportion to the defect of his Underſtanding, that ſo Imployment may fill thoſe Vacuities which Contemplation never can. This puts me in mind to advance on to the third thing propoſed.

Sect. 3. The Regulations of a Contemplative Life, which regards either, *Firſt*, The Time; *Secondly*, The Place; or, *Thirdly*, The Exerciſe and Imployment of Retirement.

Firſt, As to Time. Though Contemplation, more or leſs, ought to enter into every part of our Lives, yet the moſt ſeaſonable time of giving our ſelves more intirely up to it, is the Evening of Life, the Declenſion of our Age; we have then had our fill of the World, and ſhall not be like to hanker after it; we have ſeen the emptineſs of it, and ſhall be more like to fix upon ſolid Good; we ſhall value our Peace and Calm the more, after we have been long toſſed by Storms; beſides, we ſhall ſet our ſelves more ſeriouſly to the Meditation of Death and Judgment, when we are come within Ken of them, and ſhall be apt to examine the

the intrinſick good and evil of things with more impartiality, when the Heats of Youth, and the Boilings of our Paſſions are cool'd and ſlak'd: And finally, this is a ſeaſonable time to correct and repair the Errors of the paſt Life, and to ſtate our Accounts for the laſt Audit. But tho' I thus prefer Age, as moſt fit for a retired Life, I do not diſſuade the younger from it, provided it be Virtue, not Softneſs; the love of another World, not a cowardly declining the Duties of this, which prompts them to it; otherwiſe, it were ſure much better that the younger ſort, through the vigorous Seaſon of Life, ſhould be engaged and taken up by Buſineſs; nay, ſhould contend even with the Cares, Troubles, and Difficulties of the World, rather than make choice of Retirement to be the Scene of a voluptuous, lazy, and unprofitable Life; for in the one caſe ſomething is every day learnt, ſomething done, in the other nothing; in the one, the Man lives neither diſhonourable to himſelf, nor unuſeful to his Country; but in the other, he rots and conſumes away inglorioufly and unprofitably.

Secondly, As to Place. Soltitude has

ever been deemed a Friend to Meditation, and a Retirement from the World very ſerviceable to a Converſation with Heaven: And this Opinion is much ſtrengthened by the Practice of the *Nazarites*, Prophets, and devout Perſons in the beſt times. 'Tis remarked of *Iſaac*, that when he would meditate, he went out into the Field; and when *Moſes* met God, it was in the Deſart. Without queſtion, a private Retreat affords us many Conveniences and Advantages to a Contemplative Life; leiſure and ſilence ſettle and compoſe the Thoughts, and the Mind augments its ſtrength and vigour by reſt, complacency, and collection within it ſelf; and in this State of Serenity it is moſt fit to reflect upon it ſelf, or enter into a ſurvey of the Reſt and Peace of glorified Spirits, and examine the Grounds of its own hopes; by Retirement we at leaſt in a great meaſure free and diſengage our ſelves from thoſe things which are apt either to ſoften or diſturb us, and to breed in us either Vanity or Vexation. And I cannot tell, but the fineneſs of the Air, the openneſs of Proſpect, and Regularity and Moderation of Diet, Reſt, and Exerciſe, may have that

influence upon our Bodies, as to diſpoſe and prepare them to be the fitter Inſtruments of the Mind; to all this we may add, that the variety, beauty, and uſe of all the Works of Nature, do inſenſibly and almoſt unawares raiſe in us an admiration of the Divine Wiſdom, and invite us to adore his Power and Goodneſs. But all this notwithſtanding, it muſt ever be remembred, that Retirement does not ſo much conſiſt in Solitude of Place, as in freedom from ſecular Buſineſs and Troubles, from the Allurements, Diſtractions, and Vexations of the World; if we put theſe off, we may find Retirement enough in the moſt populous City, but if we carry theſe with us into the Country, we ſhall reap little benefit from change of Place or Air; and under the Name of Retirement, we ſhall be perſecuted with all the Evils and Miſchiefs with which Vanity, Diſorder, and Diſtraction are wont to diſquiet an active and buſie Life: This being rightly underſtood, the Nature of our Circumſtances ought to govern us in chuſing the Place of our Retreat, but eſpecially a regard to ſuch Duties, wherein we propoſe to ſpend the bigger portion of our Time.

Thirdly, The Exerciſe and Imployment of a Contemplative Life is now to be conſidered: And here theſe ſeveral things offer themſelves immediately to my Thoughts, *Buſineſs*, *Diverſion*, *Friendſhip*, *Meditation*, as comprizing all the ſeveral Acts of a Contemplative Life, and meaſuring out the ſeveral Periods of the Aſcetick's Time.

Firſt, Of *Buſineſs*. I have before ſaid, That a Life of meer Contemplation is above the Nature and State of Man; and when I conſider how few are capable of any long or regular Contemplations, I am apt to think, that the wiſeſt way for moſt is, not to diſcharge and free themſelves from all Temporal Engagements, but only from ſuch as will diſturb the Peace and Order of a retired Life; and yet I could wiſh, that their growth and improvement in Knowledge and Goodneſs, might be their main Buſineſs and Imployment. So many indeed are our Errors and Sins, ſo frail, tender, and weak our Vertue, that to correct the one, and confirm the other, is Buſineſs enough, and may of it ſelf eaſily take up the whole of Life; if we purſue diligently all the Methods of the Improvement and Advance-

Advancement of Life, we ſhall need no other Arts or Imployments to ſpend or divert our time; He that beſides a conſtant attendance upon Publick Devotion, Sacraments, and Sermons, beſtows ſome time each day on bewailing his Sins, and bleſſing God for his Mercies; on examining his preſent State, and eſtabliſhing his future Hopes: He that ſpends each day but a few thoughts on God and Jeſus Chriſt his Redeemer, on the Vanity and Uncertainty of all things in this World, but Religion and Vertue; or finally on Death and Judgment, and withal on the various Arts by which Sin and Folly is wont to cheat and ſurprize him, to tempt or deceive him, will, I believe, find but few hours to waſte; eſpecially when 'tis conſidered how much time the Neceſſities of Nature, and the indiſpenſible Duties we owe to ſome Relatives or other, take up. And this calls to my mind the Vigilance and Induſtry we owe to the Happineſs of others, as well as to our own: There are a great many Offices of Charity, to which Humanity and our Chriſtian Profeſſion (if we underſtand the Nature of Church-Membership) do oblige us; the Peace of the Neighbourhood, the

Preſervation of Laws, the promoting Publick Piety, the Inſtruction of the Ignorant, the Relief of the Needy, the Comfort of the Afflicted, the Protection of the Injured; theſe, and ſuch like Occaſions, will never be wanting to rouze our Zeal, and imploy our Charity; and theſe are Works which will turn to as good, if not a better account in the Life to come, than Solitary Virtue: And certainly they turn to excellent account in this; for when the retired Man doth cultivate the Neighbourhood, and ſow it with his Charity, he ſeems but to plant and water his own Garden, or plough and ſow his own Fields; and while he renders them more rich, gay, and fertile, himſelf reaps the Pleaſure and the Profit, enjoys the Proſpect, and feaſts on the Fruit: Juſt ſo it is in this piece of Spiritual Husbandry; he who imparts Wiſdom and Inſtruction to another, purifies and exalts his own Mind; he that ſcatters the Expreſſions of his Bounty and Charity, feels his Soul warm and delighted, and finds his Virtue and his Joy enlarged; for 'tis with Grace as 'tis with Nature, the Exerciſe of each breeds both ſtrength and pleaſure; to all which you may add,

That

That no Man conſults more effectually the Intereſt and the Pleaſure of his Retirement, than he who moſt zealouſly ſtudies the Support and Improvement of his Neighbourhood. Here's Buſineſs enough, and I could point out to you more.

But why ſhould I take pains to contrive and cut out Work for the Contemplative Man? Peradventure I ſhould do him more Service, could I teach him an Art to decline it. Alas! Buſineſs will hunt and follow us, it will intrude and preſs upon us, whether we will or no; and ſuch is the natural Vanity, ſuch the Curioſity of our Minds, that we are too often apt to make our ſelves work, and to intangle our ſelves in a thouſand Trifles and Impertinences; I doubt therefore that it is here very needful, to put thoſe I am diſcourſing to in mind, to take care, That whilſt they ſhun the Trouble and Buſineſs of the World, they ſuffer not themſelves to be entangled in Impertinences of their own creating; that they mind and purſue the main End, that is, growth and increaſe in Virtue, and be at all times ready to Sacrifice Trifles and Matters of leſs Moment to this their great Intereſt, leſt Fancy and Humor, or ſome-

thing

thing worſe, uſurp the place of Reaſon, as it does too often happen, in a Life of abſolute and uncontroulable Liberty.

Secondly, *Diverſion*. This is not to be excluded from a Solitary Life; they adulterate Religion, who make it ſour or melancholly, it condemns nothing but what infects the Purity, or breaks the force and vigour of the Mind; we are not immortal and incorruptible Beings, the Soul and Body both (for it were vain to contradict univerſal Experience) ſink under the weight of conſtant Labour, it will be hard, if not impoſſible, to preſerve the vigour of the Mind, if we deſtroy the Health of the Body. God in another World deſigns us Spiritual Bodies, as the moſt proper Inſtruments of theſe active Minds, let us not therefore make them here craſie and ſickly; I would never have my Religion be the effect of a broken Body, but an inlightned Mind; I would never have it proceed from diſcontent conceiv'd againſt this World, but from the firm belief, love, and admiration of a better; whatever therefore Diverſion recreates my Mind without enſnaring it, whatever repairs my Body without impairing my Virtue, I embrace with

with open Arms; I'll not only taſte but drink my fill of Pleaſure, if it exalt, not debaſe my Nature, I ſhall never complain that my Mind is too chearful, or my Body too vigorous. Let the Prieſts of *Baal* cut themſelves with Knives and Lancets, I'll keep my Blood and Spirits, if I can, to ſupport my Zeal, and enrich my Fancy; and in one word, to ſerve God with Life. No body can here miſtake me, unleſs they do it wilfully, and therefore 'tis not worth the while to anticipate any wild Objections; I patronize not the Luſt but the Vigour of the Body; I invite not to the ſenſuality of a polluted Fancy, but to the virtuous recreation of the Mind: And while I think not a dejected and diſcontented Mind, and a decayed Body, the moſt acceptable Sacrifice to God, I do by no means deny a penitent contrite Spirit, a purified and obſequious Body to be ſo.

Thirdly, as to *Friendſhip*. The diſtinction between Acquaintance and Friends is ever good, but never more proper or neceſſary than here; for Retirement, as it ſignifies ſequeſtring our ſelves from Company, is to be underſtood with diſcretion; and the plain Rule here, as in all

all other Caſes, is to avoid Extreams; as a Croud, ſo Solitarineſs ſeems not to miniſter, either to the Virtue or Improvement of the Mind, or to the Peace and Calm of Life; the one robs us of our Time, the other leaves us ſo much, that to very many it becomes burdenſome; the one makes us vain, trifling, or it may be worſe, ſenſual; the other dull and ſlow, or it may be moroſe and ſavage. The Skill of a Contemplative Man, is not to decline all Company, but provide himſelf of good. The Prophets themſelves had their Colleges; and they in the firſt Times, who left the Cities for the Deſart, did yet aſſociate themſelves with one another. Indeed, as I take it, in this kind of Life we have the fulleſt Enjoyment, and the beſt Service of our Friends, the pureſt Delight, and the trueſt Edification, being beſt promoted in the Contemplative Life by Friendſhip; and therefore Friendſhip is no more to be baniſhed from the Gardens and Retirements of the Contemplative, than from the Tables and Enjoyments of the Active.

Fourthly, Devotion. Participation of the Lord's Supper, and Meditation, are the remaining parts of the Aſcetick Life, and

and indeed theſe ought to be his great Employment. A Life in the World may be a Life of Buſineſs, but a retired one ought to be a Life of Prayer, Euchariſt, and Meditation: Nor indeed can it well be otherwiſe, unleſs we have propoſed to our ſelves ſome falſe Ends of Retirement; for theſe are not only the Duties, but the Pleaſures of the Aſcetick Life; in theſe the Soul is enlightned, enlarged, raiſed, raviſhed; in theſe it ſoars up to Heaven, and looks down upon Earth; in theſe it poſſeſſes Stability and Security, Peace and Reſt, in the midſt of a frail inſtable Nature, and a reſtleſs and tumultuous World; in theſe all the Paſſions of the Soul are exerciſed with a moſt tender ſenſible delight, ſorrow, fear, or reverence; Hate and Indignation do here expreſs themſelves to the height, not only without any Diſorder or Torture, but alſo with great Contentment and Satisfaction of our Nature; Love, Hope, Joy reign here without either Check or Satiety. But I forgot that theſe Subjects are ſo rich and inexhauſtible, they would engage me endleſly; I forgot that they have been treated of ſo often and ſo excellently; I will therefore contract my

Sails

Sails, and yet I think I have ſaid nothing of them, but as they have a particular aſpect upon the Subject of this Chapter, and I cannot paſs over Meditation without making ſome few Reflections upon it: I know 'tis a worn Subject, and therefore, that I may the more eaſily find Pardon, I'll take care that this ſuperfluous Impertinence, if it be one, ſhall be a very ſhort one. I will therefore take the liberty to crowd my Thoughts without Method together, leſt Order and Connection ſhould take up more Paper than the Things themſelves. *A good Beginning is more than half the Work*, is a Proverb no where truer than here; for Meditation will be like to end very unprofitably, if we enter not upon it in a good Diſpoſition and devout Frame, and if we do, it ſeldom ſucceeds ill.

The Soul therefore ought to be ſedate, calm, untouched by any wordly Concern, pure and unſullied by any Carnal Image, filled with the deſire of Spiritual Influence, poſſeſſed with the awe of the Divine Majeſty.

Yet may ſudden and extraordinary Acts of Meditation be ingrafted upon the Stock of our natural Paſſions, however firſt raiſed:

ed: Thus a troubled Mind, betaking it ſelf to reflect upon the Vanity of the World, or upon the Errors of Life and Corruption of Nature, may enlarge it ſelf in a great many very fine, affecting, and edifying Thoughts, till the Storm diſſolve into a ſoft and fruitful Shower. Thus the Mind, a little gay with Satisfaction or Joy, will eaſily overflow into Hallelujahs, if it enter into the Meditation of the Joys of Heaven, the Love and Beauty of God, the Triumphs of the Reſurrection, *&c.*

In all Meditation we ought to have more regard to Edification than Learning, to Charity than Knowledge, to devout Paſſions, than Fancy or Curioſity.

Let none deſpiſe pious Heats and Tranſports, becauſe thoſe ſhort Paſſions, often repeated, will grow into habitual Holineſs, and ſteddy Devotion.

Thoſe Arguments which we find moſt effectual to the repreſſing an inordinate Affection, or to the cheriſhing a weak and pining Virtue, are to be often ruminated; not only that they may be always ready, but alſo becauſe they are generally more ſucceſsful than others, which may yet be in themſelves of greater ſtrength and force; for Sins, like the Slaves in *Juſtin*, are

are often more eaſily defeated by Whips and Scourges, than by Swords.

The Principles which do the great Work of Religion, are few, clear, and irreſiſtible, but a vaſt Body of Sentences, Notions, Arguments, untried, undigeſted, are like the Armour of *Saul* upon *David*, unmanagable and cumberſom.

Diſputable or intricate Points do yield little or no Nouriſhment; Wit and Fancy are alſo for Ornament, not Food.

Yet weak Stomacks muſt be fed with eaſie and digeſtable Diet; and this may be made too as pleaſant and inviting as it can. God in the Works of Nature has mingled Beauty with Uſe, Pleaſure with Profit, why ſhould we think this unlawful in the Kingdom of Grace? Variety alſo may be called in to prevent languor and drowſineſs; nay, if the Genius of the Man be ſuch, that his Mind is apt to be exalted, and as it were purified by them, I know not why notional and thin, or myſterious and deep Speculations ſhould be forbidden him; only in theſe, and ſuch like Inſtances, two Errors are to be avoided: *Firſt*, That we do not ſtudy more for Delight and Entertainment, than for Edfication in Faith and Vertue. *Secondly*,

Secondly, That we do not obtrude our Fancies as Oracles, our Dreams as Articles of Faith upon the World. If I cannot indulge or abound in both, give me the Luxury of Love rather than that of Fancy, and let me excel in Humility and Modesty, rather than Knowledge and Notion

St. *Peter*, in those few words, 1 *Epist.* 2. 2. *As new born Bades desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby*, seems to have excelently sum'd up the whole Doctrine of Contemplation, comprising at once the Mater, Design, and End of it, together with the Frame and Disposition of Mind, qualifying us for it.

Writing may serve to marshal and preserve our Thoughts, and by this means we may be stocked with Notions which may always be ready Matter and Argument for us to expatiate on; but we ought to take care, that first or last we be moved or affected by what we write, or else this will be rather an Exercise of our Invention than Devotion; and all the Products of it will be rather Essays of Wit and Fancy, than of holy Meditation; and we shall be rather apt to be pleased with our Parts, than improved by this Practice.

They who are unable to ſtart proper Matter for Contemplation, or to carry it on regularly and coherently, and by conſequence can reap little Fruit by this kind of Exerciſe, may ſupply theſe Defects by Reading, and ſuch Reflections and Applications of it as are moſt eaſily and obviouſly made: For Example, *Mat.* 5. *And ſeeing the Multitudes, he went up into a Mountain: And when he was ſet, his Diſciples came unto him. And he opened his Mouth and taught them, ſaying*; O bleſſed Jeſus! Thou, the true Doctor and Teacher, whoſe Words are Life and Light, Spirit and Truth, I will leave the Multitude, I quit the World, and in the quality of a Diſciple I approach near thee; O do thou open thy Mouth, and ſpeak to me! I deſire not to hear the Voice of the World, or of the Fleſh, or of the Devil; ſpeak *Thou* only to me, ſpeak *Thou* to my Heart, and to my Conſcience, and let me hear and feel that Voice that ſpoke Purity to the Leporious, and Life to the Dead. *Bleſſed is the Poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* The Kingdom of Heaven, this is a Bleſſedneſs indeed! The Kingdoms of the Earth dazle and aſtoniſh me, my Fancy cannot comprehend, my

my Ambition cannot aſpire after their Grandeur and Glory. Ah! what then muſt the Kingdom of Heaven be! But, O my Lord, am I of the number of theſe Poor! If I be not, make me ſo; let me be never ſo contemptible to the World, ſo I be approved and acceptable to thee; let me have no ambitious Thoughts but for thy Favour, and for the Crown of Righteouſneſs; let me covet no Riches, no Honour, no Power here, if thy Kingdom be but mine in Reverſion, it is abundantly enough! Thus, without ſtraining or pumping, Perſons of the loweſt Talents, if they have any Tincture of Religion in them, may be eaſily ſupplied with variety of Argument, and with moſt paſſionate and piercing Thoughts.

O bleſſed! O voluptuous Life! wherein, ſequeſtred from the World, I enjoy all that it has in it of pure, of true, or natural. Ah! that I could once break looſe from thoſe Troubles and Obligations that hang upon me, and enter into thy Peace and Tranquility! I would plunge my ſelf into all thy rational Delights; I would looſe my ſelf to this contemptible World, and forgetting thoſe Shadows and Appearances, and at beſt

but faint and weak Reflections of Good, which flutter here about me; I would abandon my ſelf intirely to the Joys of the Spirit, and the Elevations of Contemplation: Let others enjoy Honour, and Wealth, and Power; let me enjoy my ſelf, Truth, and God; let others enjoy the Flatteries of Senſe, and the Cheats of Fancy; give me the Health of a ſpritely Mind, the Calm and Serenity of a ſilent Retreat, with the Pleaſure and Security which the Divine Preſence breeds in it; let others finally depend on Fortune, me only on my ſelf.

SECT. III.

Of the Right Husbanding or Prolonging Life.

HAving in the two former Sections, firſt, proved Life to be in its own Nature a ſolid Good, a conſiderable Bleſſing of Heaven; and next, endeavoured to prevent the Abuſes and Miſchiefs to which it is liable, by ſtating the true Notion of Life; and by preſcribing Rules for the right Conduct of the *Active*, *Trading*,

ding, and *Contemplative Life*: The next thing that naturally falls under Conſideration, is, The ſhortneſs and uncertainty of this Bleſſing; this is that that puzzles the Wit, and baffles the Courage of Man, the Rock againſt which all the Attempts of Humane Philoſophy have daſhed and ſplit themſelves; for, to ſay truth, whatever Complaints Men make againſt the Troubles, yet have they ever made more and ſharper againſt the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of Life.

'Tis true, no Cure has ever yet been found of our Mortality; yet as wiſe Men have ever thought it reaſonable to make the moſt of an Enjoyment, thô it would not come up to all that they could wiſh or fancy; ſo, were there no other Life, it would behove us to do with this, to nouriſh and keep in the flame as long as we can, tho' we know it muſt go out at at laſt.

Now Life, like Enjoyment, is capable of Acceſſion or Increaſe two ways, that is, either in its Continuence, or Perfection; either by lengthening its Duration, or by raiſing, improving, or, as it were, ripening the Joys and Fruits of Life, or Life it ſelf. I will ſpeak firſt of *prolonging Life*; and here I will, *Firſt*, Demonſtrate

that *Life* may be prolonged. *Secondly*, I will treat of the ways of prolonging it.

But before I do either, it may be no very wide Digreſſion from my Purpoſe, to take notice of the little Artifices and Impoſtures by which many endeavour to evade the ſtroaks of Time, and flatter themſelves with a ſort of imaginary Immortality.

CHAP. I.

The uſual Arts of preventing or retarding the Decays of Nature, and leſſening the Fears of Death exploded, and better ſubſtituted in their room. Phyſick, in ſtead of which, Courage and Contempt of Death. Paint, &c. in ſtead of which, the Beauties of the Mind. Children, in ſtead of which, Good Works, and ſo forth.. Surviving Honour not wholly rejected, but a true Immortality preferred.

SOme take Sanctuary in Phyſick, for which they expect at leaſt the preſervation of the Health and vigour of Nature, if not the lengthening the Date of Life: I'll not diſpute whether this Art has deſerved ſo well of Mankind, as to

to juſtifie the Gentiles in enrolling the firſt Authors of it amongſt the Gods, or ſome Chriſtians in attributing its Original to Guardian-Angels: I'll not examine the poſſibility of that Elixir by which *Arteſius* is reported by the *Adepts* to have lived a Thouſand Years; nor, what is more to the purpoſe, who have lived longeſt, whether they who have made moſt, or they who have made leaſt uſe of Phyſick: Or, however theſe Queſtions be reſolved, I am ſure our Time is better ſpent in labouring to contemn, than to prevent Death; and that thoſe excellent Principles which fortifie the Mind, contribute more to the comfort and pleaſure of Humane Life, than the moſt Sovereign Cordials that fortifie the Spirits.

Some being willing to conceal thoſe Decays which they could not prevent, and cannot remedy, have deviſed many ways to counterfeit and ſupply that Youth and Beauty which Time and various Accidents have waſhed and worn away. But alas! to what purpoſe is it to deck and varniſh withered Nature, and paint the Spring upon the Face of Winter? To what purpoſe is it, when the Evil is incurable, to ſuffer ones ſelf to

be flattered and impoſed upon, and try in vain to hide a broken Fortune, not only from the World, but from ones ſelf? Alas! we muſt feel what we will not ſee; Nature droops and decays as faſt within as it doth without; and we loſe the Life and Briſkneſs of our Blood, as faſt as we do the Elegancy of Feature, or the Floridneſs of Complexion. In a word, as to this periſhing Body; *Phyſick*, Waſhes, and Fucuſes are in vain; you but paint and patch a ruinous Fabrick, which can never be made ſtrong and beautiful till Death hath taken it quite down to the Ground, and a Reſurrection build it up quite a-new. If therefore you would take my advice, you ſhould lay in a ſtock of ſprightly generous Pleaſures, which may be ever ready at hand to entertain you when youth and ſtrength are paſt; you ſhould take pains to enrich and adorn the Mind, whoſe Beauties will more than ſupply the loſs of thoſe of the Body; Wiſdom, Magnanimity, Bounty, Modeſty, Sweetneſs, Humility, are Charms able to recommend a deformed or a decrepit Body, and I am confident may be purchaſed at a much cheaper rate, than falſe or counterfeit Beauties are by

by thoſe who are ſolicitous about them; let then the Morning and Noon of your Life be ſpent in acquiring Virtue, Honour Knowledge, and good Humor, and in your Evening you'l have no reaſon to complain of the loſs of Youth and Beauty; theſe will be ſolid Riches, and moſt amiable Charms, that will provide you both delight and ſupport at home, and command both love and reverence abroad; and Time will do you no other injury than it does a Tree, when it changes its Bloſſoms into Fruit; or then it does Statues, Medals and Pictures, whoſe price and value is enhanced by their Antiquity.

Convinced that the Decays of Nature cannot be long concealed or propt up, ſome pleaſe themſelves with an Opinion of Surviving in their Poſterity; as if Man by Generation did but multiply himſelf, and Life did not, like a Flame, end with its fuel, but were conveyed and tranſmitted from Father to Son, Grandchild, and ſo on; like a Stream that's ſtill the ſame, thô it paſſed through numerous Pipes. Well, for my part, I cannot fool my ſelf with a vain gingle of words; I cannot flatter my ſelf that I ſhall live in him, who probably will in a little time forget

forget me, however he owe his Being and Fortune to me; nay, it may be, proud and ungrateful, will wiſh that others did forget me too; like a Stream running, as ſoon as it enlarges it ſelf, as far as it can from its little Fountain, and labouring as it were by its circlings and wandrings, to conceal the meanneſs of its riſe: I cannot flatter my ſelf, that I can live in them whoſe Hopes and Fears, Deſires and Joys, will differ it may be no leſs from mine, whatever they now be, than the Dead do from the Living: Fools that we are, to talk ſo wildly, as if when dead we lived in our Children; do we, when living, ſhare in their diſtant Joys? or do our Pulſes beat by their Paſſions? I would not be miſtaken, as if I deſigned to oppoſe or extinguiſh Nature; I know the great Author of it, for wiſe and excellent Purpoſes, has implanted in us kind Inclinations towards Poſterity, but then theſe are for the ſake of others, not my ſelf, they ripen into Actions that ſerve the turn of others, not my own; I only bear the Fruit which others muſt gather. And whatever Pleaſure I may now feel in a promiſing Proſpect of the Honour and Virtue of my Poſterity, 'tis ſuch a one as that of

Moſes

Moſes beholding *Canaan* at a diſtance, but ſuch a diſtance that he muſt never enter into it. To conclude, whatever Men promiſe themſelves, I think them tolerably fortunate, if inſtead of reaping any benefit, when dead, from their Children, their Lives be not ſtained and diſturbed by them; extreamly fortunate, if they can make them fit to be their Friends and Favourites, worthy to ſhare their Pleaſures, and able to give them ſome eaſe in their Troubles; thô after all, I cannot but think 'tis infinitely more eligible to be the Father of many Good Works, than many Children; to have a Philoſophical Friend or two, than a numerous Offſpring; and to ſpend my time nobly in cultivating my Mind, than in intangling my Life with Cares for thoſe who often will take none for themſelves.

Some have entertain'd vain Projects of an imaginary Immortality, an Immortality which they muſt owe neither to God nor Nature, but to Hiſtorians and Poets, Painters and Statuaries, and to the dying Eccho's of a ſurviving Memory; I mean, that which Men ſeek in Poſthumous Fame, in Pictures, and Statues, and Tombs, and embalming Carkaſes; all theſe ſeem to carry

carry in them ſome fading ſhadows of Being and Exiſtence. But ah! how imaginary a Life is this; ſomething that does infinitely leſs reſemble Life and Being, than a Dream does Enjoyment? Ah vain ſupport of Humane Frailty! Ah vain relief of Death! If there be any thing in Honour, if it be Body or Subſtance enough to be ſeen, or felt, or taſted; if it be Reality enough to be any way enjoyed, let me poſſeſs it while I live; it comes too late, if it ſerves only to increaſe the Pomps of my Fueral, or to dreſs and ſet off my Sepulchre, or to ſilence the Groans, or to wipe off the Tears of my Orphans, or my Friends, thô this be ſomething: I cannot feel any pleaſure in the Foreſight of that Glory, which, while I ſtrain to gaze upon at diſtance, the Fogs and Miſts of Death thicken the Sky; the Voice that will ſpeak me great, will ſpeak me too gone and vaniſhed; the Statues and Marbles which adorn my Memory, will adorn my Grave too, and while they expreſs my Image, or my Actions, will proclaim, that all that is now left of me, is Rottenneſs and Aſhes. All this I talk, abſtracting from the Conſiderations of a future Life; for how far the

the Reputation I leave behind, may concern my Soul in its ſtate of Separation from the Body, whether the Ecchoes of thoſe Praiſes and Honours beſtowed upon my Memory here, will reach and pleaſe mine Ears in another World, I know not, nor do I much deſire to know; for ſuppoſing ſuch a Life, my Soul muſt needs have nobler Employment, and nobler Pleaſure than this can ever give it: I muſt confeſs, if the Reflections of my Light, when I am ſet and gone, would be of any uſe to direct or inflame Poſterity, I ſhould now take ſome pleaſure in that, which 'tis hard to perſwade me, I ſhall take any in hereafter; nor would it be a trifling Satisfaction to me, while I lived, if I could believe that my Relations, or my Friends, could receive any Honour or Patronage from me when dead; and ſince ſome ſort of Character I muſt leave behind, ſince I muſt in this manner, amongſt ſome at leaſt, and for a little time ſurvive, I had much rather leave behind me perfume than ſtench; I had rather live in Panegyrick and Commendations, than in Satyrs and Invectives. But after all, how Lean and Miſerable a Comfort is this? that when I am dead,

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it will be ſaid, I once lived; and a promiſcuous Croud will talk of me, and of my Actions, what they pleaſe; ſome Things good, ſome Things bad, ſome Things true, ſome Things falſe; and what is worſe yet, I muſt ſuffer all the Revolutions of Humours and Parties in following Ages; theſe muſt give my Abilities and Performances their Character, and the prevaling Faction muſt ſtamp what Eſtimate they pleaſe upon my Memory.

But by all this, I do not mean utterly to condemn the love of Honour, nay, 'tis really to be cheriſhed when it operates rightly, and ſpurs Men on to generous and handſom Actions: I love a Charity that is univerſal and boundleſs, and extends it ſelf to following Ages; and certainly there is not a nobler Charity, than to furniſh the World with an Example that may adorn its own Times, and enkindle the Emulation of Poſterity. Nay farther, I am willing to believe, that a gracious God will ſum up, amongſt the Accompts of my Life, the influence it has upon the World when I am dead, and to raiſe the Eſtimate of my Virtue, will conſider it not ſimply in it ſelf, but with all the happy Effects which it may any way be

be the occaſion of in ſucceſſive Ages; let me then do good, and if I can, great Actions, upon any Motive, provided it be juſt and allowable, ſince this will be the bleſſed Fruit of it: But yet it ſhall be my Buſineſs to make ſure of my own Immortality, if that of my *Name* will follow, let it: It ſhall be my buſineſs to gain the Approbation of God and Angels, and if the Praiſes of this lower World joyn their Harmony and Conſent with that above, this cannot diſoblige me; I will with all my power make ſure of my Salvation, and not deſpiſe Fame: Great and good Men have ever felt ſome natural Deſires of this ſort of Immortality. Since then this ſeems to be an Inclination of God's own planting, 'tis not to be extirpated, but rather carefully cheriſh'd and cultivated, and duly pruned and regulated.

Having exploded thoſe miſtaken Fancies, by which Men ſupport themſelves againſt the ſhortneſs of Life, I will now proceed to treat of the only two ways by which this Evil may be in ſome meaſure remedied; that is, by prolonging the Date, and by improving and perfecting the Nature and Eſſence of Life, ſo that a Man may live much in a little time.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of Lengthning Life.

Sect. 1. *The* Fatality *of the Period of Life refuted. And Objections from Scripture, from Aſtrological Predictions, from Divine Preſcience, anſwered. A ſort of Fate admitted.* Sect. 2. *Of the ways of prolonging Life.* Firſt, *Cheerfulneſs of Mind.* Secondly, *Health of Body.* Thirdly, *The protection of God and Man.* Sect. 3. *Objections againſt this laſt Aſſertion from ſuch Texts as aſſert the promiſcuous Events of Things, and from the early Death ſometimes of the Righteous, Anſwered.*

UNder this Article I deſign to proſecute theſe three Things:

Firſt, To refute the Opinion of a *fatal* Period of Humane Life. A Fancy which has poſſeſſed the Multitude, and with which the Minds, even of ſuch as would ſeem above it, are not ſeldom aſſaulted.

Secondly, I will conſider what ways the Date of Life may be lengthned.

Thirdly, I will remove thoſe Objections with which this Advice is encountered,

tered, either from the promiſcuous Events hapning alike to Good or Bad, or from the early and immature Death of ſome righteous Perſons. To begin with the firſt of theſe:

Firſt, It has been too generally taught and believed, That the Date of Humane Life cannot be protracted, that every particular Man has a fixed and immutable Period decreed him, beyond which he cannot go. But this Opinion directly defeats the force of all Motives and Arguments to Virtue, derived from Temporal Conſiderations, and undermines our dependance upon God, and ridicules our Addreſſes to him, as far as they concern this Life, and the Things of it: And how plain a ſtep is this to the refutation and overthrow of Judaiſm, which was built upon Temporal Promiſes, and conſequently to the overthrow of Chriſtianity it ſelf, the Authority of the New Teſtament depending in ſo great a meaſure upon that of the Old, I'll leave every one to gueſs. And were there no other Reaſons to reject this Opinion, beſides theſe alone, theſe I ſhould think were abundantly ſufficient, ſince it is impoſſible that any thing ſhould be conſonant

to Truth, which is ſo repugnant to the Intereſt and Authority of Religion; but there are ſo many more, that I muſt be forced to croud them together, that I may avoid tediouſneſs and redundancy. This Perſuaſion then is repugnant to all the Inſtincts of our Nature; to what purpoſe is the Love of Life implanted in us by our great Creator? Why is Self-preſervation the firſt Dictate and Law of Nature, if all our Care and Diligence can contribute nothing towards it? Vain and impertinent is that Law, whoſe obſervation can procure us no Good, nor its Violation any Evil. This is a Perſuaſion that flatly contradicts the Experience and Obſervation of Mankind in general; how can the Period of Life be fixed and unalterable, which we ſee every day, either lengthened out by Care and Moderation, or ſhortened by Exceſs and Negligence? unleſs we can reſolve, to the utter overthrow of Religion, not only that Life and Death, but alſo that Vice and Virtue, Wiſdom and Folly, which lead to the one and the other, are alike predetermined neceſſary and fatal. Nor is this Opinion leſs contrary to the Senſe and Reaſon of the Wiſe and

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Prudent, than to the Experience of the Multitude; Self-preſervation is the firſt and chief End of Civil Societies and Humane Law; but how foppiſh and ridiculous a thing were it for the Grave and Sagacious part of Mankind to enter into deep Conſultation, to frame ſolemn Laws, and deviſe the ſtrongeſt Obligations to fence and ſecure that Life which can neither be invaded one minute before its fatal hour, nor prolonged one minute beyond it; nor has Man only, but God himſelf, endeavoured to ſecure this Temporal Life by the ſtricteſt and moſt ſolemn Laws; nor this only, but he has made Life and Death the Reward of Obedience, and Puniſhment of Sin. This Opinion therefore is a manifeſt Calumny againſt the Wiſdom and Sincerity of God; againſt his Wiſdom, if he raiſe up the Palliſado's and Bulwarks of Laws to guard and defend that Life, which can neither be violated before, nor extended beyond its minute: His *Sincerity*, for his Promiſes would be ludicrous and inſignificant, and ſo would his Threats too, if neither the Obedience of the Virtuous could lengthen, nor the Diſobedience of the Sinner could ſhorten Life; and in a

word, to what purpoſe does the Spirit in 1 *Pet.* 3. 10,11. invite and encourage Men to Religion by the Propoſal of Life and Proſperity, if in the bottom and truth, Life and Proſperity depend, not on our Behaviour, but our Fate; and be not diſpenſed according to the open Propoſals, but the ſecret and unconditional, the rigid and inflexible Decrees of the Almighty? I would not ſtop here, but heap together a multitude of other Arguments againſt this Error, did I not remark, that as it has prevailed too much to be deſpiſed, ſo has it too little to be laboriouſly refuted, and that it has ſo weak a Foundation, that few of thoſe that defend it do believe it, or at leaſtwiſe ſo heartily, as to ſuffer it to have any Influence upon their Counſels or Actions; Turks, Aſtrologers, and the moſt ſuperſtitious Aſſertors of Fate, being no more free from the Fears of Death, or a Concern for Life, than the reſt of Mortals.

The truth of this Propoſition being thus made out by unanſwerable Reaſons, we are not to ſuffer our ſelves to be moved by any ſuperſtitious Imaginations, by any obſcure or ſubtle Objections, or by any meer Colours or Appearances of Rea-

Reaſon; for what is once clear and evident, ought to remain firm and unſhaken, tho' we cannot unravel every Objection againſt it: Therefore tho' I ſhould not be able to reconcile this Doctrine with ſome obſcure Texts of Scripture, with a certainty of God's Preſcience, and with ſome particular Predictions of Men, who have pretended to read the fatal Periods of Humane Life in the Schemes of Heaven; yet ought its Authority to be preſerved, as built upon plain Texts and ſolid Reaſons, and atteſted by the Suffrages of the Prudent and Wiſe, and by the daily Obſervation of the Multitude. But the truth is, there is nothing objected here, but what is capable of a very eaſie anſwer; the Scriptures, which ſpeak an appointed time for Man upon Earth, are not to be underſtood of any particular perſonal Fate, but of a general Law or Rule of Nature; not of the extent of every particular Perſon's Life, but of the duration of Man in general, or of the Mortality of our Frame and Conſtitution, and the ſhortneſs of Man's reſidence here upon Earth; and imply no more than that Man, as well as all other Species of Animals, and indeed of Vegetables,

(for ſo far *Job* extends the Compariſon) hath his time appointed, the Bounds of his Life or Abode here ſet him, beyond which he cannot paſs. *Pſalm* 90. 10. *The days of our age are threeſcore years and ten, and tho' men be ſo ſtrong that they come to fourſcore years, yet is their ſtrength then but labour and ſorrow, ſo ſoon paſſeth it way, and we are gone.* As to Aſtrological Predictions, if the Accompliſhment of any of them be atteſted by unqueſtionable Authority, and they be not like the Prophecies of Poets, made or mended after the Event, yet methinks, were not the Minds of Men very prone to Superſtition, a thouſand Errors ſhould be ſufficient to diſcredit and diſparage one good Gueſs, and no Man of Senſe ſhould have a value for a pretended Science, whoſe Grounds and Principles are evidently uncertain and precarious; no Man of any Religion ſhould be fond of that, which, to ſay no worſe of it, ſeems to ſtand condemned by God in Scripture; for tho' I muſt not diſſemble this Truth, that the Idolatry which was ever blended with it, ſeems eſpecially to have drawn down a ſevere Sentence upon it, yet can it not be denied, but that *Iſaiah* 47. *Jeremiah*

remiah 10. and other places of Holy Writ ſeem to look upon it with no very favourable or benign Aſpect. As to the Preſcience of God, I ſee not how the denial of a fatal Period of Humane Life claſhes with this; on the quite contrary, he ſeems to me injuriouſly to limit and reſtrain the Knowledge of God, who thinks he foreknows nothing, but becauſe he peremptorily predetermined it; this, if we will ſpeak ſenſe, is to magnifie his Power, but to reduce and confine his Knowledge, or at leaſtwiſe to depreſs and debaſe it; for thus it would not be a primary and eſſential Perfection, but would reſult from, or depend upon an Arbitrary Will, an unguided Power: For my part, I cannot think it neceſſary, if I could not reconcile God's fore-knowledge with contingency in Events, therefore with the *Socinian* to deny the one, or with the *Fataliſt* the other; 'tis enough to me that I learn from Scripture, that is, from God who cannot err, that Preſcience belongs to the Creator, and Contingency to the Creature; the meaſures and bounds of theſe, if there be any, let who will ſeek, 'tis not my Buſineſs now.

But yet, after all this, if any Man

will contend for ſuch a kind of Fate as is not rigid and inflexible, but ſubmits to the interpoſal of the Divine Prerogative, and leave ſufficient Encouragement for the Labour, Virtue, and Prayers of Man, I oppoſe it not; Nature has its Laws, but ſuch as God, whenever he pleaſes, overrules; the Government of Man is not without order and method, much leſs the Government of God; we are born into the World with different Conſtitutions, but yet the unhealthy one may be rectified and mended by Virtue, the healthy corrupted by Vice and Irreligion; ſuch a ſort of Fate or Deſtiny as this that is flexible, and accommodated to the Intereſt of Religion, in which the Evil may be corrected, or the Good perverted; ſuch a Fate as this, tho' the Word be improper, I readily admit, but no other: No other, I ſay, in the general; for as to thoſe particular Exceptions and Reſervations, which at any time God may, and often does make, from any general Rule or Law, for Cauſes always weighty and important, and generally hidden and inſcrutable, theſe I meddle not with.

Having thus evinced that the Period of Humane Life is not fatally fixed, that

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no peremptory and unconditional Decree, no inſuperable Connection or Concatination of Cauſes does ſuperſede our Vigilance and Induſtry for the preſervation of this Bleſſing: I will now proceed to the ſecond thing propoſed, and conſider which way the Date of Life may be lengthened.

Sect. 2. *Of the ways of prolonging Life.*

'Tis obvious and manifeſt to every one, that Life depends upon theſe three Things: The Cheerfulneſs of the Mind; The Health of the Body; and a favourable Providence of God; by which, as none will deny who admit of Providence, we may at leaſt be protected from violence and unlucky Accidents, ſuch as Humane Prudence cannot foreſee. And to theſe three, may, for ought I know, be added, the good Will of Man, whoſe Miniſtry and Service is very often of excellent uſe to us in this Point.

Firſt, The firſt thing then I am now to enquire into, is briefly, what Cheerfulneſs of Mind does contribute to the Preſervation of Life, and then more fully, how we may poſſeſs our ſelves of it.

'Tis true, the moroſe and ſour, the fro-

froward, the paſſionate, and the ſullen, thoſe Stains and Blots of Humane Nature do often prolong their Lives to a great Age, as if Nature were renewed and repaired by this kind of Fermentation, or the Blood and Spirits kept ſweet like Water by a perpetual Agitation; but 'tis as true that the Looſe and Debauch'd, the Intemperate and Incontinent do ſometimes, tho' rarely live long, and deſcend into the Grave, rather oppreſſed by their Years than their Exceſſes; and if from ſuch extraordinary Inſtances as theſe, we ſhall take the Liberty to form Rules of Life, and to contradict known and received Truths, we ſhall ever live at the mercy of Fancy, and never find any ſure and firm footing to reſt upon. I will not therefore doubt, notwithſtanding theſe rare Inſtances, but that the cheerfulneſs of the Mind has a very propitious, its Diſcontent, a very malign influence, upon the Life of Man; the Contentment of the Mind preſerves the Balſom of the Blood, and the Pleaſure of it enlarges the Heart, raiſes the Spirits, actuates and invigorates all our Powers; ſo that when the Mind ſhines ſerene and bright, it ſeems to impart a new warmth,

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and new life to the Body, a new Spring, and new Verdure to this Earth: On the contrary, a diſeaſed Mind does, as it were, ſcatter its Contagion through the Body; Diſcontent and Melancholy ſours the Blood, and clogs the Spirits; Envy pines away; and Paſſion frets and wears out our Strength and Life. In few words, there is an intimate conjunction between the Mind and Body; and ſo cloſe is the dependance of the latter upon the former, that the Face of inferior Nature does evidently vary, wither, or flouriſh, according to that variety of Weather it makes in the Sky above it, as the Mind ſmiles or lowrs upon it; and accordingly, if we appeal to Experience and Obſervation, I believe we may ſafely pronounce, that generally ſuch live longeſt, who either think very little, or whoſe thoughts are always calm and cheerful; ſuch who are ſtupid, and have no Paſſions; or are wiſe and good, and have none but ſuch as are regular and delightful; to this purpoſe, in part, is that of *Solomon*, *The Spirit of Man will ſuſtain his Infirmity, but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* All this, I think, is not conteſted; and all the difficulty lies in poſſeſſing our ſelves

ſelves of this ſatisfaction and contentment of Mind; Men ſeek it in every thing, and even thoſe things which are Diametrically oppoſite to one another, do each pretend to be infallible Guides to it: Atheiſm and Religion, Philoſophy and Ignorance, Worldly Prudence or Policy, and an affected contempt of it, which I know no name for, do all promiſe to teach us the Art of Satisfaction; but it will not be a very difficult task, when we have examined the pretences of each, to reſolve which we are to follow.

Ignorance, Luſt, and Fancy, are too blind, raſh, and violent for us to abandon our ſelves to their Conduct; nor are they more giddy and inconſtant in themſelves, than weak and ſubject to all the Changes and odd Accidents of the World; ſo that ſhould they lead us on to Pleaſure, we have reaſon to apprehend Pain the next moment, and at beſt, they leave us not in a Condition, either rationally to approve our Enjoyments, or to fortifie our ſelves againſt the loſs of them.

Worldly Policy is built wholly upon Miſtakes, it propoſes to us things under the notion of great and good, which when we have examined, we find not worth

worth our ſeeking, and of theſe it can give us no aſſurance, whether we reſpect their Acquiſition or Poſſeſſion; and the ways it preſcribes to put us in poſſeſſion of all that ſatisfaction which reſults from theſe things, have ſomething in them ſo mean, ſo laborious, ſo uncertain, ſo vexatious, that no Succeſs can compenſate that trouble and ſhame which the canvaſſing for them puts us to.

Atheiſm pretends indeed to extinguiſh our Guilt and Fears, but it does alſo deface all the beauty and lovelineſs of Humane Actions; it pretends indeed to let looſe the Reins to Pleaſure, but withal, it leaves us no ſupport under Evil; it takes off indeed many Reſtraints, but withal, it unchains and lets looſe our Paſſions: In a word, it leaves us nothing truly great or lovely to enjoy in this World, or hope for in another; and if its Tenets were uſeful to us, yet have they no certainty, no foundation; it derives all its credit from the Confidence, not Reaſon of Men, who under colour of a free and impartial Philoſophy, advance the Intereſt of thoſe Luſts to which they are intirely enſlaved.

Religion then only remains to be followed;

lowed; this rectifies our Opinions, and diſpels our Errors, and routs thoſe Armies of imaginary Evils which terrifie and torment the World, much more than Spirits and Ghoſts do; this diſcovers to us Objects worthy of all the love and admiration of our Souls; this expiates our Guilt, and extinguiſhes our Fear; this ſhews us the happineſs of our preſent Condition, and opens us a glorious proſpect of our future one; this diſcovers to us the happy tendency of Temporal Evils, and the glorious reward of them; and in one word, teaches us both to enjoy and ſuffer; it moderates our deſires of things uncertain, and out of our power, and fixes them upon thoſe things for which we can be reſponſible; it raiſes the Mind, clears the Reaſon, and finally forms us into ſuch an united, ſettled, and compacted ſtate of Strength, that neither the Judgment is eaſily ſhaken, nor the Affections hurried by any violent tranſport or emotion. But do I not here imitate Phyſicians, who attend only to the moſt dangerous Symptoms, and neglect others? Whether I do or no, they who read ſuch general Directions, are wont to do ſo in their Ap-

Application of them; and moſt are apt to look upon Religion as deſigned only to redreſs ſubſtantial and formidable Evils. And yet 'tis with the Mind as with the Body, tho' Fevers, Impoſthumes, Defluxions, *&c.* kill, the anger of a Puſtle, the pain of a Tooth, do ſtrangely diſorder and diſturb; and thus tho' Pain, and Death, and ſuch like Evils, overthrow and overwhelm the Mind, yet are there a croud of ſlight and trifling Evils which diſquiet and diſcompoſe it; and this is a Matter not to be contemn'd, eſpecially by, me in the proſecution of the Deſign I am here upon, ſince I perſuade my ſelf that the great and formidable Evils, Guilt, Pain, Poverty, Sickneſs, Death, or the Thoughts and Apprehenſions of them, do but very rarely afflict the Life of Man; but there are other Evils of a ſlighter Nature, which, like Pirates, are perpetually cruiſing on our Coaſts, and tho' they cannot invade and deſtroy, do much diſturb and annoy us. Nay, what is yet more, 'tis very uſual to ſee Men acquit themſelves very honourably under true and ſubſtantial Evils, who come off very poorly from the Encounter of ſlight and deſpicable ones; how common

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is it, for one who maintains bravely his Courage and Judgment amidſt Swords and Bullets, to loſe all Patience, Prudence and Government, when attacked by a rude Jeſt, a brisk, or it may be a bold and ſenſleſs Reflexion? To ſee a Man that hears very calmly the loſs of a Ship, or a conſiderable Sum of Money, tranſported into ſtrange indecency upon the breaking of a Glaſs, or the ſpoiling of a Diſh of Meat; and he who ſits very tamely and unconcernedly down under a diſgraceful Character, ſweats and raves if robbed but of a Cabbage or an Apricock: Theſe, and ſuch like Remarks, one may make every day, and almoſt in every Company; and what is the worſt of all, our Fears and Sorrows, our Hate and Anger, are as violent and uneaſie, when they ſpring from Cauſes of the leaſt, as of the higheſt moment. We bewail fantaſtick and true Misfortunes with the ſame ſighs and tears, and reſent imaginary and ſubſtantial Injuries with the ſame diſordered Pulſe and deformed Looks. When I have reflected on all this, I have often thought that it was as neceſſary to the tranquillity of Humane Life, to guard my ſelf againſt Duſt

Duſt and Flies, as againſt Storms and Tempeſts, to arm my ſelf againſt the Stings of a ſwarm of vexatious Accidents, as againſt Peſtilence, and War, and Poverty, and Blindneſs, or Deafneſs. And to this end, theſe three or four following Rules have often been of great uſe to me. *Firſt*, Of the Evils of Life I never take more to my ſhare than are really my own, I never travel abroad to find out foreign Miſchiefs to torment my ſelf, as if there were not enough of the Native growth of my Country; may own Mind, my own Body, my own Houſe, are Provinces, wide enough for me, and a little too fruitful too; nay, I am not aſhamed to confeſs, I decline, if I can, an Evil, even lying in my way, as I do a Buſtle or a Fray, by paſſing on the other ſide of the Street. I'll never ſplit upon a Shelf or Rock, if I have Sea-room enough. And as a little diſtance of Place, ſo a little diſtance of Time, ſerves my turn to make me reckon ſuch Evils as none of mine: I'll no more diſtract or diſturb my ſelf with the Evils that are fancied teeming in the Womb of Time, than with thoſe that are now in being in *Peru* or *Mexico*; this is the very Lecture Religion reads me, for ſure

to incorporate diſtant Evils, or to anticipate future ones, were far from *ſtudying to be quiet, and doing ones own buſineſs*; or from thinking with our Saviour, *Sufficient for the day is the Evil thereof*, and were indeed to ſuffer as *buſie bodies, fearful, and unbelievers*; If any Man will impute this to me as Brutality and Uncharitableneſs, I cannot help it; I thank God that I have ſenſe enough to practiſe Caution without Fear, Care without Anxiety, and Charity without Diſtreſs or Agony of Mind. *Secondly*, As to thoſe Evils (I ſpeak ſtill of ſlight and daily ones) which do realy fall to my ſhare, and I cannot avoid; my next Care is to weaken their Force, to diſarm them of their Sting, their Teeth and Venom, if they have any; I take from them all the Terror that Fancy and Opinion have given them, and will no more, if I can help it, ſuffer my Imagination, than my Taſte or Feeling, to be abuſed or impoſed upon. In the next place, I carefully fortifie and ſtrengthen my ſelf, ſee that my State be healthy, and my Nature firm, leſt I ſhould complain of the Meat, when the Fault is in my Stomach; or think the Bed ill made, when the cauſe

of

of my Uneaſineſs is in the Body. And laſtly, When I have reduced the Evil to its own natural ſize, generally 'tis of ſuch a Pigmy, Dwarfiſh Growth, that I can ſecurely ſlight it, I can maſter it with very little Trouble and Induſtry, or at worſt with a very little Patience; and that I may not be wanting here, I look upon it as a Task I am born to, as an Inconvenience that I can no more ſhun, than any natural Defects in my Body, or my Mind, or than I can the Cares and Fatigues of my Calling. *Thirdly*, I labour above all things to fill my Soul with great and raviſhing Pleaſures, to inflame it with a generous Ambition, and, in a word, to poſſeſs it with that habitual Poverty of Spirit, Meekneſs, Purity, Charity, commended to his Diſciples by our Lord and Maſter, that I am generally above the buz and fluttering of theſe, rather Impertinences, than Evils of Humane Life; and do often ſuffer them without being ſenſible of them; but I can never often enough put the World in mind of the vaſt difference there is between the fits and habits of theſe Virtues. What we could do in a pious humour, that we ſhould always do, were but the

weak Impreſſion once converted into Nature, the ſhort-liv'd Paſſion changed into ſteady Habit; but 'tis high time to purſue my deſign, I am almoſt afraid I dwell ſo long upon a Head, that the moſt pertinent Parts of my Diſcourſe may now and then look like Digreſſion. The next thing to be conſidered, after the *Cheerfulneſs of the Mind*, is,

Secondly, The Health of the Body. Life does ſo apparently depend on this, that in the vulgar Notion it ſignifies much the ſame thing. 'Tis notorious, Life decays and expires with the health and ſtrength of the Body, and when it is protracted after theſe are gone, it ſcarce deſerves the Name of Life, any more than the Noiſe of an ill-ſtrung and ill-tuned Inſtrument does that of Muſick. But I need not teach any Body the value of Health, or preſs them to the preſervation of the Body; I ſhould be ſufficiently obliging to the World, if I could teach it any Art by which they might be reſtored to that Bleſſing which it enjoyed before the Flood, a long Life of many hundreds of Years. But I know no Art that can raiſe Nature above its own Laws, or retrieve its Youth, if it be now in its De-

Decrepitude: One thing I know, that we too commonly debauch and corrupt Nature firſt, and then load her with our Reproaches and Accuſations; we ſhould undoubtedly live much longer, and this Life would be more healthy and verdant, that is, more vital than it is, did we but obſerve the Dictates of Religion, the Laws of Virtue, and not prefer before them thoſe of Luſt and Fancy. How much ſoever Men complain of the ſhortneſs of Life, 'tis little to be doubted, but that moſt Men do notwithſtanding ſhorten it themſelves by ſome Crime or Error or other. If we could conſult the ſickly, craſie part of Mankind, I mean ſuch as are ſo in the middle, or almoſt begining of their Years, and demand of them, What blaſted their Beauty, and impaired their Strength; What thus violated, and contaminated their Nature? We ſhould ſoon be reſolved to what Original their Diſeaſes were owing, if at leaſt their Shame and Bluſhes would give them leave to inform us: And if we ſhould endeavour to trace the Deaths of moſt of thoſe who are gone hence before their time back to their firſt Cauſe, I do not think but that our Search would ſoon end

in ſome Vice or Folly or other; this Man drank too much, the other too much indulged his Appetite; one was devoted to his Luſt, and another putrified in his Sloth; all of them, in our common Phraſe, *did live too faſt*; but in Truth, and Propriety of Speech, *died too faſt*; for ſince Life is nothing elſe but acting by Reaſon, every Deviation from it is an Approach towards Death. But to proceed; 'Tis not unuſual to ſee Pride kill one, Paſſion another, Avarice and Ambition a third, while, to gratifie theſe Affections, the Body is either expoſed to Dangers, or worn out by Labour. Now, if we can generally find the Cauſes of moſt early Deaths in Men's Vices, when ſo little of other Men's Lives comes to our knowledge, what think you, ſhould we not be able to diſcover, if we could enter into the Retirements, and penetrate all the Secrets of Mankind? How many hidden Paſſions do gnaw the Heart? How many ſecret Sins do waſte and conſume the Strength? Where not only Concealment excludes the Eye, but a ſhew of Probity, nay, a real and eminent Practice of ſome particular Virtue, excludes even Suſpicion and Jealouſie? If then

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Immorality do often contract the term of Life, 'tis evident what is to be preſcribed for the prolonging it, Religion or Virtue is the beſt Phyſick: It has often mended an ill Conſtitution, but never ſpoled a good one. When did ever Chaſtity impoveriſh the Body, or deflour the Face? when did ever Temperance inflame the Blood, or oppreſs the Spirits? When did ever Induſtry or Vigilance ſour the Humours, and enfeeble the Nerves? No Crudities, no Plethories, no Obſtructions, no Acidities, no Stagnations, Extravaſations, and I know not what hard Names, and harder Things, derive themſelves from Virtue or Religion. 'Tis true, a Man may be Righteous over-much, he may entitle his Folly, his Melancholy, his particular Fancy, or his particular Complexion, or Conſtitution, to Religion, and this may prove miſchievous to him, to his Health, to his Strength, but then this is not the fault of Religion, but the Man; and to ſpeak properly, this is not Righteouſneſs nor Religion, tho' it be call'd ſo, but it is Fancy and Folly, or an ill Conſtitution diſguiſed under the Garb and the Meen of Religion. Virtue then is the moſt probable way to a long Life, or if not

ſo, at leaſt to a more comfortable and honourable Death; for where an early Death is the Reſult of a Providence, not a Crime, we muſt needs meet it with leſs Amazement our ſelves, and our Friends behold it with leſs Regret and affliction.

Thirdly, The third way of prolonging Life, is to engage the Providence of God in its Preſervation. If all the Promiſes God has made the Virtuous of a long Life did really ſignifie nothing, I cannot ſee how we could put up any Requeſt to God, relating to Temporal Protection, with Faith or Fervour, or as much as Sincerity; but if they ſignifie any thing, then ſurely they muſt ſignifie, that his Providence is actively imployed for the preſervation of virtous Men: And how great ſecurity is this? What can be impoſſible to him who is the Governour and Creator of the World, in whoſe diſpoſal all created *Means* are, and in whoſe Power it is, if theſe be unſufficient, to create new ones? To him, whoſe unerring Laws can never miſs of thoſe Ends he aims at? Or if they could, his Power is ever at hand to ſupply their Defects, and accommodate and attemper them to particular Emergencies; and his Prerogative

gative is under no Ties, no Limitations, but thoſe of his Divine Wiſdom: Well might the *Pſalmiſt* ſay, *I laid me down and ſlept, for 'tis thou, Lord, makeſt me dwell in ſafety.* Every good Man might ſay the ſame as far as he has a Divine Warrant, not in Peace and Health only, but in Sickneſs, in a Tempeſt, whether by Sea or Land, in a Plague, in a Battle, in a Siege, in a Storm; to believe our ſelves under the Patronage and Protection of God, ſeems to me nothing leſs than to believe, that he will make thoſe things we are concerned in flow with a ſmooth and gentle Stream, that he will place us in a ſtate or condition of Life, ſafe and agreable; or if not, that in Diſtreſſes and Dangers he will contrive the Methods of our Reſcue, and where the ordinary are inſufficient, find out extraordinary; that he will concur and cooperate with the natural courſe of Things, or if he ſee it fit, that he will exert a ſupernatural Force, and vouchſafe an extraordinary Succour. Plainly thus, thô I know not the unſearchable Methods of Divine Providence, yet from God's concerning himſelf for my Good, I may boldly infer, that in my Sickneſs I may hope

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for that from God, which I cannot from the skill of my Phyſician; that in troubleſome Times I may expect that from Providence which I cannot from the Wiſdom, Juſtice, or Power of the Magiſtrate; that in neceſſitous, involved, and intricate Circumſtances, I may promiſe my ſelf that Iſſue from his Favour, which I cannot from the Prudence, Integrity, or Bounty of my Friends: And in a word, that in all Caſes I can hope for that from my Prayers, which I otherwiſe could not from Humane Power or Policy. The ſum of all is, all the natural means of our Security and Life are in the hands of God, and if theſe ſhould be deficient, nothing can reſtrain him from exerting a ſupernatural Force and Virtue for our Preſervation; his fixed and univeral Laws are infinitely wiſe; but if at any time our Affairs ſhould require his immediate interpoſal, I know not why I ſhould fancy his Prerogative ſo bounded, that he cannot, or will not interpoſe; and tho' his Pavilion be thick Clouds, and he walk upon the Wings of the Wind; tho' his Providence be a great Abyſs, and the ſwiftneſs and ſecreſie of his Actings elude our Search, and baffle our Inquires, ſo that we

we cannot diſcern when he Acts by Prerogative, when by Law, yet I doubt not but that he does frequently exert a miraculous and extraordinary Power.

This being ſo, 'tis plain that our great Buſineſs is to engage the Providence of God on our Behalf, that we may have an unerring Guide of this dubious and floating Life, a firm Support of this mortal corruptible Nature; and I think I need not prove, that Religion is the effectual way to oblige God: If this be the great Meſſage that we have received of the Son of God, *that God is Light*, then St. *John's* Inference muſt needs be good, that he only who walks in the Light, can maintain a Communion with him, that is be dear and acceptable to him; a Spiritual and Rational Worſhip muſt be the only Method to endear our ſelves to a God, who is a wiſe Spirit. Nay, tho' all the Precepts of Religion ſhould not be neceſſarily founded in their Conſonancy and Agreeableneſs to the Divine Nature, yet ſtill ſince they are the Precepts of God, we need ſearch for no other Reaſon for the Acceptableneſs of our Obedience: 'Tis true, all the heights of Purity, to which the Goſpel invites us, are not neceſſary

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to the health and ſtreangth of the Body, yet are they ſerviceable to the perfection and improvement of our Nature; they are not all indiſpenſible to the happy conduct of our Temporal Affairs, but they are uſeful to the Felicity and Glory of our Eternal; and therefore the more Religious we are, the more we ſhall pleaſe God: But I will inſiſt no longer on ſo unconteſted a Point; Nature it ſelf dictates, that an imitation of their Virtues is the ſtrongeſt Obligation we can lay upon the Wiſe or Good; and Obedience the moſt effectual Recommendation of us to the Sovereign Powers; whether therefore we conſider God as the *Beſt*, or the *Greateſt*, the Characters under which the Light of Nature did ever repreſent him, Religon, that is, Imitation and Obedience, are the only ways by which we may ever come to pretend to his Favour.

Nor is Virtue leſs apt to procure the Favour and Amity of Man, than that of God; it fences us about with the Arms and Succours of Mankind, it guards us with all their Eyes, and with all their Prayers; for their Love and Reverence make them both active and wakeful in our Service. How

How directly repugant to all this are the Effects of Irreligion? It leaves us no other Safeguard than that of our own Strength and Vigilance; which, to ſpeak properly, is to deliver us up into the hands of our Folly and Fear, our Weakneſs and Cowardiſe: For alas, what were my ſingle Reaſon or Force, when I have neither God nor Man to ſecond me! How much leſs, when the Indignation of the one, and the ſecret Averſion or open Enmity of the other, ſcare and intimidate me! How can a Man hold out againſt Dangers, if he be betrayed by his own Guilt within, and his Reaſon, overthrown by ominous Fears, do not leſſen, but multiply his Terrors: Hence is that of *Salomon, The Wicked flee when no Man purſueth, but the Righteous are as bold as a Lion:* Abandoned by God and Man, he ſeems at laſt abandoned by himſelf too.

The ſum of what I have ſaid under this Article amounts to this; Firſt, I have proved that the Date of Humane Life is not fatal and unalterable, from whence I thought it neceſſarily followed, that it was capable of being prolonged or protracted; therefore I proceeded, Secondly, to conſider by what means it might be

be prolonged: And here, ſuppoſing that nothing could be more conducive to this than *a chearful Mind, a healthful Body, and a propitious Providence*, I have made it evident, that theſe are to be ſought in the practice of Religion and Virtue, which is nothing elſe than what inſpired Authors have frequently taught; *Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Thou ſhalt come to thy Grave in a full Age, like as a ſhock of Corn cometh in its Seaſon.* A bleſſed and perfect Religion! at once the Guard and Joy of Life! at once the Support and Delight of Humane Nature!

Sect 3. *Two Objections againſt the Deſign of the former Paragraphs, anſwered.*

But againſt this whole Diſcourſe it will be objected, *Firſt*, How is this that you contend for? How are thoſe Texts which make length of Days the Reward of Obedience to the Divine Laws, reconcileable with thoſe other, which, as far as concerns their Temporal Effects, ſeem to equal Wiſdom and Folly, and level Righteouſneſs with Wickedneſs, aſſerting the promiſcuouſneſs of all Events to the Virtuous and Vitious? *All things come alike*

alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked, to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that ſacrificeth, and to him that ſacrificeth not: As is the good, ſo is the ſinner, and he that ſweareth, as he that feareth an Oath, Eccleſ.9.2. And this is extended as far as Death it ſelf; *How dieth the wiſe man? as the fool,* Eccleſ.2.16. Innumerable are the Anſwers to this Objection, but one only fits my purpoſe, which is plainly this, That theſe are Rhetorical Exaggerations of Humane Vanity; Wiſe and good Men, as well as others, have their Natural Paſſions; and therefore Divine Writings have their Figures, as well as thoſe that are purely Humane: Theſe therefore, and the like Speeches, deſign not to derogate from the Efficacy of Virtue, or weaken the force of the Divine Promiſes, but to humble the Vanity of Man, and convert his fondneſs for this World into a greater for a better; and are not therefore to be underſtood in ſuch a general and unlimited ſenſe, as if there were no difference between the Righteous and the Wicked, with reſpect to Temporal Good and Evil, Life and Death; but only thus, that the

the Righteous are not ſo univerſally exempt from Temporal Evils, but that ſome or other of them, in all Ages, are liable to them, even to an untimely Death it ſelf: But what then? Such extraordinary Inſtances of an inſcrutable Providence, ought no more to derogate from the Excellence of Wiſdom and Virtue, or the Veracity of God, than ſome few Shipwrecks ought to diſcredit Navigation, or the failing of ſom few Traders diſparage Art and Induſtry, 'tis enough that the Experienced and Skilful, the Careful and Diligent, do generally Sail and Trade ſucceſsfully. And this may in part ſuffice for an Anſwer to another Objection of the ſame Nature with this, only that this relates to all Events in general, but the Objection following to a particular one.

If long Life be a great Bleſſing at preſent, and recommends Men to greater afterwards, and if Religion and Virtue be on both theſe Accounts entitled to it, whence is it that an immature Death ſnatches away ſometimes the beſt of Men, that it ſtops them in the very progreſs of their Virtue, and in a full career towards Perfection and Glory? I anſwer,

7. The Providence of God is a great Deep,

Deep, *His Judgments are unſearchable, and his ways paſt finding out.*

2. I cannot believe that this early Death, which intercepts the Fruits of a growing Virtue, ſhall bereave the Virtuous of any degree of that future Glory, to which ſuch Fruits would have entitled them; I ſhould rather think, with the Author of the Book of *Wiſdom*, that having compleated their Perfection in a little time, they had in a little time finiſhed their Courſe, and by what they did do, gave ſuch plain Proofs of what they would do, that God rewards their Purpoſes as he does the Actions of others, and therefore haſteneth to take them to himſelf. But however this matter be, I am content to believe,

3. That as God orders all the particular Events of Life to the Good of thoſe that love him, ſo much more muſt he diſpoſe this biggeſt Event that befals a mortal Man, that is, Death, to their Intereſt and Benefit; and therefore this immature Death is doubtleſs, to the Righteous, better than Life, tho' we ſhould not be able to diſcern why. They die in their Perfection, their Glory yet unſullied, their Felicity unſtained, no vile

Temptation, no Misfortune having yet triumphed over them, an Advantage which we much admire when we ſee great and good Men ſurpriz'd, or overpowred by Weakneſſes and Calamities; for then we cannot but acknowledge, that if Death had come ſooner it had been much kinder, for they had been gathered into the Store-houſe of the Dead, like Corn into the Granary before unſeaſonable or immoderate Rain had corrupted it, or any malignant Vapors blaſted it.

Laſtly, I know not how Heaven has dealt with theſe its Favourites; peradventure 'tis in the Moral as in the Political World, ſome are born to that Greatneſs which others acquire with labour; he never dies too ſoon who dies ripe and perfect; and if theſe Divine Souls came into the World enrich'd with more Light and Beauty, with more impetuous Inclinations to Virtue than thoſe of other Men; if their ſhort life were ſo innocent, ſo bright, that out of a particular Grace God thought fit to exempt them from the Miſeries of this Life; or that upon the account of a particular Pre-eminence, they needed not paſs through

through the Trial, the Diſcipline and Purgations of it, on either of theſe Supposals we ought not to commiſerate, but revere their Fate.

CHAP. III.

Of improving Life, or Living much in a little time.

What is to be underſtood by improving or exalting Life, and the Advantage of this Notion. Three ways of improving Life. Sect. 1. *By perfecting Nature. Man and Life, mean things till Wiſdom and Virtue ſtamp a value on them. This particularly exemplified,* with reſpect to Knowledge, *and the due regulation of the* Affections. Sect. 2. *By beginning to Live betimes, or at leaſt immediately. No Objection againſt becoming preſently wiſe and happy, but the difficulty of becoming ſo. An Exhortation, Addreſſed,* 1. *To the Young.* 2. *To thoſe advanced in Years. Cloſed with a Reflection on the Day of Judgment.* Sect. 3. *By avoiding all thoſe things that are injurious to Life; as Sloth, Impertinence, Remiſſneſs or Coldneſs in Religion; Levity and Inconſtancy.*

cy. Some other Directions deferred to the following Treatiſes.

TO underſtand aright what it is I here aim at, what I mean by the *Improvement* or *Exaltation of Life*, 'tis neceſſary to call to mind the true Notion of Life laid down in the beginning, That it is the right uſe of all our Powers and Faculties, the rational Exerciſe, the wiſe Imployment of our whole Nature. Now if this be ſo, 'tis plain that we live juſt as much as we act and enjoy, I mean always rationally; that as we advance and grow up towards a Perfection of Nature, the more is Life alſo raiſed and refined: Thus if the Life of the Underſtanding be to think, to diſcover and contemplate Truth and Goodneſs, then ſurely its Life is enlarged with its Knowledge; if the Life of the Soul of Man, I mean his Will and Affections, be to chooſe and purſue, admire and love true Good, then certainly our Life is perfected with our Virtue, and augmented with our Religion. In a word, if the life of Man do not conſiſt in the Motion of Animal Spirits, but the Exerciſe of his Rational Powers and Faculties; if the true Health of

of Man be not to be judged by the regularity of his Pulſe, but the Harmony of his Affections; if finally, the thing called Life be not to be meaſured by Hours, and Days, and Months, and Years, but by Activity and Enjoyment, by the Rational Acts of a Rational Nature; then ſure I may boldly conclude, That the more regularly and conſtantly we purſue the proper Buſineſs of our Nature, the more actively and vigorouſly we are carried on towards that which is our proper Good, ſo much the more we *live*, ſo much the more rich and racie, the more true, natural, and pure is Life; and all this is no other Philoſophy than what the Wſe-man has long ago advanced; *For Honourable Age is not that which ſtandeth in length of time, nor that is meaſured by number of years. But Wiſdom is the gray Hair unto Men, and an unſpotted Life is old Age*, Wiſdom 4. 8, 9. This indeed is a Truth of too vaſt an Importance to be a new one; for were it but once throughly imbibed, it would relieve all the Preſſures, and redreſs all the Grievances of Humane Life. We complain of Life, that is dull and nauſeous, we impeach it of vanity and vexation, of

ſhortneſs and uncertainty, how would this one Notion, well purſued, ſoon ſilence all theſe Complaints? He would never think Life too ſhort, who were ripe for Death; he would never complain that Life were uncertain, who were always ready to die; he would not accuſe Life of dulneſs and nauſeouſneſs, who were daily advancing his Diſcovery of Truth, and enlarging his Poſſeſſion of Good; nor would he ever charge it with Vanity and Vexation, were his Actions ſtill wiſe and rational; for thus every act of Life would be an act of Fruition too, being both agreeable to Nature, and attended by a delightful Approbation and Complacency of Conſcience. By this time 'tis plain what the Deſign of this Chapter is, namely, to compenſate the ſhortneſs by the excellence of Life, and redreſs the vanity and vexation of it by its Perfection; a Deſign, I confeſs, worthy of a more comprehenſive Mind, and a more elevated Fancy than mine; a Deſign, demanding all the Wiſdom and Experience of an Active, and all the Thought and learning of a Contemplative Life; a Deſign, in a word, that requires at once the Prudence of old Age, and

and the Vigour of blooming Years; that I am willing to contribute the little I can towards it, proceeds from a ſenſe of its being a Duty I owe my ſelf and Mankind: Let me not therefore be oppreſſed by the grandeur of my Subject, and the expectation of my Reader, I promote the good of Mankind in my way, and as I am able, it were a Crime if I did not, and it will be Injuſtice to expect more from me: Beſides, I purpoſe not here to lay out my whole ſtrength, tho' this be little, having deſtined an entire Volume to *Humane Perfection*; and therefore ſhall here Diſcourſe but very briefly, and in very general Terms, of the Improvement of Life.

All the Advice I ſhall offer here, may be reduced to theſe Three Heads.

Firſt, That we endeavour to perfect and exalt our Nature.

Secondly, That we begin to live betimes; or if we cannot now do that, our Years being far ſpent, that we begin to live immediately.

Thirdly, That we avoid all thoſe things that are Enemies to our true Life.

Sect. 1. We muſt endeavour to perfect and exalt our Nature. The Neceſſity of

this will be very conſpicuous to any one, who ſhall conſider that the Perfection of our Acts depends upon the Perfection of our Faculties and Powers, juſt as the pleaſure of Seeing does on the goodneſs of the Eye, or that of Hearing on the Perfection of the Ear, ſo much, and much more, does the Beauty of Humane Action and the Guſt of all our Enjoyments depend upon the clearneſs of the Judgment, the rectitude of the Will, and the vigour of our Paſſions. To render this Argument yet more viſible and palpable, let us conſider how mean a thing Man were, and how contemptible Life, without Cultivation or Improvement: The Body is but a heap of Duſt, ſomething there needs to ſtamp a value upon it; ſomething there muſt be to give Sweetneſs to the Eye, Charm to the Tongue, and Grace to Motion: 'Tis a meer Machine alike capable of being made the Inſtrument of Cruelty or Mercy, of Luſt or Chaſtity, of Avarice or Charity; 'tis Religion muſt purge and ſanctifie it; 'tis Wiſdom muſt conduct and guide it, and make it the happy Inſtrument of great and glorious Actions. The Spirit within us is a volatile, mutable,

ble, unſteady thing, capable of all ſorts of Impreſſions, ſuſpended as it were between Heaven and Earth, floating between the different Shores of Good and Evil: Knowledge and Virtue forms it into Angel, ſtamps a ſort of Divinity upon it, for we are not born, but made great; 'tis Wiſdom that imprints it with bright Idea's, that impregnates it with noble Paſſions, and determines its tendency towards its true Good and ſupreme Felicity: Our Converſation with the World is naturally nothing elſe but a dull entercourſe of Forms, and Ceremonies, and Civilities, a nauſeous Circulation of the ſame taſteleſs and ſuperficial Entertainments, a tedious and repeated purſuit of vain miſtaken ends, and often baffled Deſigns; 'tis Virtue and Knowledge that gives guſt and reliſh to our Enjoyments, and Life and Spirit to all our Actions; that leads us on towards excellent Ends, and inſpires us with immortal Hopes; our Fortune and Condition in the World is naturally a fluctuating unſtable Agitation, made up of a confuſed and motly variety of Events; Knowledge and Virtue fix the floating Iſland, and give Light and Beauty to the Chaos.

I can never carry this Argument too far, and therefore I will yet a little more particularly conſider what Acceſſion or Increaſe of *Life* we derive from *Perfecting* our Natures. Does Life conſiſt in the Exerciſe of our Faculties? True Life then is the Portion of the Active and Induſtrious; the dull and heavy Motion of the Sluggard is but a faint Imitation or Reſemblance of it; 'tis a diſeaſed languiſhing thing, a compound or mixture wherein there ſeems to be more of Death than Life. Does Life conſiſt in Fruition? How dark and diſmal are thoſe of the Wicked, compared to the calm and bright days of the Good! For what can there be like Enjoyment to that Man, who dares make no Reflections on the paſt, nor can entertain any juſt Hopes of the future, and whoſe Mind concurs not with his preſent Paſſions, and refuſes to join in the ſenſeleſs Deſigns he is upon? Does Life laſtly conſiſt, as I have proved it does, in the Knowledge of Truth and Love of Goodneſs? How ſcanty, narrow, and beggarly is the Life of the Fool and Sinner, compared to that of the Wiſe and Virtuous! *Tully* ſaid, *One Virtuous day was to be preferred before a ſinful immortality*;

mortality; this is true in the preſent Senſe and Notion of Life; Error and Ignorance are as it were a Diſeaſe or State of Inſenſibleneſs and Death to the Underſtanding; the Mind, that is utterly ignorant of Objects worthy of it, has nothing to imploy it ſelf upon, or at leaſt nothing that gives it any ſolid ſatisfaction; but the Mind, which is filled with the Knowledge of excellent things, has a great variety of Scenes to entertain it, and never wants ſome freſh Occaſion of delight and Wonder. But it will be ſaid, Does not the Fool behold the viſible World as well as the Philoſopher? He does, but juſt as he reads a Poem, without diſcovering the Artfulneſs of its Contrivance, the Richneſs of the Fancy, or Variety of the Incidents. The Sinner hears talk too of an invinſible World, of Moral Perfections here, and of Divine Joys hereafter; but he hears it unmoved, unaffected, which ſhews he has no lively Notion, no diſtinct Perception of any thing of this kind; the Glaſs is dulled and ſullied; Beauty it ſelf would looſe all Charm, reflected thus. But Humane Perfection conſiſts not in Knowledge alone, but alſo in the Purity of the Heart,

Heart, in the regulation of the Affections, in Love and true Liberty, that is, the Heart muſt be ſet upon Objects worthy of it, and we muſt purſue our true Good with vigour and conſtancy; and this is that which renders Life truly delightful and uniform; without Objects to engage our Affections, we can ſcarcely be ſaid to live, we ſhall be becalmed, and ſcarce be ſenſible of the breath we draw; and unleſs theſe Objects be worthy and agreeable, all is but Storm and Tempeſt, Cheat and Torment, and our Faculties are not rationally imployed, but abuſed, deluded, depraved, tortured. Could we but comprehend what all this did amount to, or at leaſt, could we feel and experience it, we ſhould ſoon diſcern that the Wiſe and Good, and they only, did truly live; for theſe only know God and themſelves; theſe only admire, and love, and rejoice, and hope rationally; and theſe only are not confined nor limited in their Knowledge or their Affections, for the Objects of both are infinite; their Minds can never travel ſo far in the Contemplation of God and the moſt important Truths, but that there is ſtill a new World to be further diſcovered; nor can their

their Admiration or Love, their Joy or Hope, ſo elarge themſelves, as ever to equal the Objects of theſe Paſſions, and reach the utmoſt that is in them. But 'tis probable, after all, the Fool and Sinner will pretend to engroſs the Goods of the Earth, as if they alone were to poſſeſs and enjoy them, as if they were the Heirs of this World, the Righteous, of the other; but this is a vain fancy, and has been often baffled. Who can haſten more to enjoy, than he who knows the true value and right uſe of all things? And who can enjoy more in any thing, than he who at once gratifies his Reaſon and his Appetite, and pleaſes his Inclination, without forfeiting his true Liberty? If to be fooled and cheated, if to be enſnared and tormented, by the things of this World, be a pleaſure, in this the Chriſtian muſt indeed give place to the Infidel, the Righteous Man to the Sinner.

The Sum then of this whole Matter is, Life in the fooliſh, mean, and vicious Soul, ſeems like a little Rill of Water, confined within narrow and ſcanty Bounds, or like the Light of a Candle incloſed within the narrow compaſs of a Dark Lanthorn; but in the Wiſe and Under-

Underſtanding, 'tis like a mighty Stream which ſwells above its Banks, and ſpreads it ſelf over a vaſt Plain; or like Light unconfined, which diffuſes and darts it ſelf over all the Face of Nature. Ah! therefore how much does it import me to fill my Underſtanding with bright and lovely Images, with pleaſing and important Notions, with all the Truths that can ſerve, either to delight or guide, to nouriſh or adorn, to ſupport or fortifie me in this World, or advance my Title to the Joys of another? How much does it import me, to fill my Soul with Love, Love of all that's Good or Great; Love of all that's Pure or Sacred; Love of all that's Beautiful or Delightful? and laſtly, that my Body may be a fit Inſtrument of ſuch a Mind, it does not a little import me, that this be ſtrong and healthy, vigorous and vivacious.

Sect. 2. The ſecond way to improve Life, is to begin to Live betimes; or at leaſt, if your Years be far ſpent, to begin to Live immediately, which is all we can do. Life, in my Notion of it, dawns with our Reaſon, and grows up to ripeneſs and perfection with the Virtue, Liberty, and Tranquillity of the Soul. To be

be Wiſe, and to be Religious, this is to Live, for in this conſiſts Fruition and Enjoyment; in this the Health and Vigour of our Faculties; in this the Harmony and Beauty of the whole Frame of our Nature; and this, and no other, is a rational and agreeable Exerciſe of all our Powers and Capacities. Whoever therefore will improve Life, ought to begin next moment to aſſert his Liberty, and to give up himſelf to true Philoſophy: 'Tis ſtrange to ſee how Men put off this, or attempt it only ſuperficially, and by the by; they prefer, I will not ſay Trades and Husbandry, and various ſorts of Knowledge, foreign and remote from the Service and Conduct of Humane Life, (ah! that Time were but ſo well ſpent in general;) but they prefer even Dreſſing, Painting, Drinking, Gaming, and all, not only the moſt ſilly and trifling, but the moſt vile and infamous ways of conſuming Time, before true Wiſdom and Philoſophy: Nay, amongſt thoſe that make Profeſſion of Wiſdom, and pretend to have dedicated themſelves to the Doctrine of Jeſus, 'tis common to ſee great Numbers Hearing, Talking, Reading, Diſputing, without ever making any

any uſe of thoſe Truths they ſtudy and contend for, or feeling any warmth or influence of them; like thoſe wiſe ones in Temporals, who are laying up Proviſion and Treaſure all their Life long, which they will never uſe, never enjoy. Ah wretched Conſumption of Life! How ſoon will the laſt Minute expire? And the unhappy Man will not have lived one Year, one Month, one Day, but will have waſted a precious Treaſure of Time, and he muſt go immediately and account for it. Well, let the World live after its own faſhion, I plainly ſee the point I am to make; no Day, no Hour ſhall paſs me unimployed; every Moment, if I can, I will grow wiſer and better; 'tis not how long I laſt, but how much I live; I will *Know*, I will *Act*, I will *Enjoy* to Day, and then I am ſure I have lived a Day; this moſt propoſe to do, ſome time or other, but not to Day: And why not to Day? Why not preſently? is there any Evil in being immediately wiſe, immediately free, immediately rational, immediately happy? It cannot be, if the ſtate I am in be really good; if the Pleaſures I enjoy be really ſuch as my Reaſon can ſhare in, and my Conſcience can approve; I then indeed

indeed live: There's no need of Change and Reformation, but Continuance and Perſeverance; but if they be not, why will I not exchange falſe for true, and irrational for rational Pleaſures? If I am in the right, if my Condition be truly good and ſafe,'tis well; there's nothing further to be done, but to maintain my Ground: But if I am in the wrong, if the Foundation be unſound and rotten, and whilſt I dream not of it, my Health and Fortune, I mean my imaginary Happineſs, conſume inwardly, waſte and decay inſenſibly; why am I fond of the Cheat? why am I unwilling to be undeceived and diſabuſed? And why not preſently? The Reaſon is plain, they acknowledge the Repreſentation I have made to them of a Virtuous and Rational Life, is very pleaſant and taking; but to be born into this new State, to come forth into this moral Light is as troubleſome, as the Infants being born into the Natural. They love the Eaſe and Wealth of a proſperous Trader, but not the Hardſhips of his Apprenticeſhip, the Thrift and Confinement of his Beginnings: They love Lawrels and Triumphal Arches, the Glory and the Pleaſure of Victory, but cannot endure the

Toils and Hazards of War. Or plainly thus, they admire Liberty of Mind, Serenity and Rational Joy, but it will coſt them much Labour and Pains to purchaſe it. Thus the wretched Man, fearing the Regiment of Phyſick, wears out a miſerable Life in the Pains of a Diſeaſe, and one that has a Cancer or Gangreen chooſes to waſte and rot in Pain by Piecemeal, rather than undergo the ſhort pain of Amputation or Abciſion. Nay, what is worſe than all this, Men are fond of their Diſeaſes, love the things that increaſe and nouriſh them, as the Groſs and Corpulent do Reſt, the Lethargick Sleep, and Hydropick Drink.

This is the ſtate, the deplorable ſtate of the far greater part of Mankind, a ſtate of Diſeaſe and Death, a ſtate of Bondage and Captivity, a ſtate of Infatuation and Enchantment; and I very much fear, that whatever Motives can be extracted out of the Subject I am now upon, will be too weak and feeble; for what can all the Diſcourſes in the World about Rational Pleaſure and the Satisfactions of a Regular and Virtuous Life amount to with Men wholly given up to Senſuality, and incapable of reliſhing any pure and ſacred Delights?

Delights? If I have ſucceeded ſo far, as to poſſeſs them with an Opinion that a Life of Reaſon or Religion is a Life of Pleaſure, tho' they have not any true guſt, or clear and lively Notion of this Pleaſure, 'tis the utmoſt I can hope for; but to perſuade theſe Men to embrace this Life, there is need of all the Arguments that either Reaſon or Religion can adminiſter; and theſe too pointed with all the Life and Spirit, with all the Edge and Flame that Wit or Judgment can give them; a Task too hard for me. O God! thou lover of Mankind, that thou wouldeſt aid me by thy Spirit, while I ſtrive to prevail with Young and Old to ſeek thy Glory and their own Happineſs, to purſue Virtue and true Pleaſure. I will firſt addreſs my ſelf to the Young, and then to thoſe more advanced in Years.

1. To the Younger. You are now in your Bloom; what glorious Fruit may you bring forth! what Honour may you do God! what Service may you render your Relations and your Country! and what Joys and Bleſſings may you not heap on your ſelves! Time and Tide ſeem to wait on you; even the Providence and Grace of God, with Reverence be it ſaid,

ſeem to attend and court you. But ah! remember, they will not do ſo for ever; theſe Smiles and Invitations of Heaven and Nature will not laſt continually; your Infidelity or Ingratitude, your Folly and Senſuality, will ſoon blaſt and wither all theſe fair hopes, turn all your Pleaſures into Gall and Wormwood, and all your bleſſed Advantages into the Inſtruments of your Ruine, and Aggravations of it too: Grace will ſoon retire, Nature degenerate, Time grow old, the World deſpiſe you, the God of it frown upon you, and Conſcience, guilty Conſcience will be either ſtupified and benum'd, or feſter and rage within you, and Death will come, and then Judgment; and how ſoon 'twill come, ah! who knows? Sudden and early Deaths ought to convince you on what uncertain Ground you ſtand; the Sithe of Death ſtays not always till the Harveſt be ripe, but promiſcuouſly mowes down the Young and Old. Ah! begin, begin then to live; ſeize upon Pleaſure and Happineſs while they ſtand courting and inviting you; purſue Virtue and Glory immediately, while the Difficulties are fewer, your Strengths and Aids greater; your

Judg-

Judgments being not yet corrupted by the Maxims, or rather the Fancies of the World; nor your Wills yet diſabled and enſlaved bp a Cuſtom of Sin. Ah! venture not to devote your Youth to Vanity and Folly, on preſumption of devoting your Age to Repentance and Religion: For if this were a rational and juſt Deſign in it ſelf, yet is it to you a very unſafe and doubtful one: For which way can you enſure Life, or on what ground can you confide on the Morrow? *Boaſt not of to morrow, for thou knoweſt not what a day may bring forth*, Prov. 27. 1.

I know what Oppoſition will be raiſed againſt this kind of Exhortation, and with what rude Reflections they will be treated: *Come*, ſay they, *this is our Spring, let us enjoy our ſelves whilſt we have time and vigour; Religion looks too grave and formal for theſe years: we ſhall have time enough to be dull and melancholy: Come on then, let us enjoy our ſelves as becomes our Youth; this is our Portion, and our Lot is this; and whatever they who have now out-liv'd themſelves, whoſe Blood is ſour, and Spirits low, may gravely talk againſt theſe things; they too, when time was, admir'd what they now would have us deſpiſe as Vanity, and committed*

themſelves, what they now condemn in us. In Anſwer to this, let us paſs over the Briskneſs and the Flouriſh, and examine the Senſe and Reaſon of this ſort of Talk: The Subſtance of it may be reduced to three Heads.

Firſt, Youth is the Seaſon of Pleaſure, *i.e.* Sin and Folly; Inclination and Opportunity conſpire to invite you to it, therefore you indulge it. What a ſtrange Argument is this? Is there any Period of our Life, from our Cradle almoſt to our Coffin, I mean from the Moment we arrive at the uſe of Reaſon to our Grave, wherein ſome Sin or other is not in ſeaſon: May not Manhood defend Ambition, and old Age Covetouſneſs, by the ſame Argument by which you do your ſinful Pleaſures? If Inclination to a Folly would juſtifie our Commiſſion of it; in what part of Life ſhould we begin to be Wiſe and Virtuous? 'Twill be hard to find the time wherein we ſhall have no Inclination to any Sin or Folly; or rather, if this be ſo who can be Guilty? The Adulterer will impute his Uncleanneſs to the impetus of his Luſt; the Murderer his Bloodſhed to the violence of his Rage, *i. e.* each of them their Sins to the ſtrength of their

their Inclinations; and if your Argument be good, they will be innocent. But do not deceive your ſelves, then is your Obedience, as moſt acceptable to God, ſo moſt indiſpenſable in it ſelf, when you lie under Temptations to Sin; and Heaven is propoſed as a Reward, not of following, but conquering your Inclinations. The ſecond part of the Objection is, That Religion doth not look very graceful in young Years. This I could never well underſtand; if you be ſo fooliſh as to think Religion conſiſts in ſour Faces, or an affected Moroſeneſs and Sullenneſs, or in Stupidity and Melancholy, I muſt confeſs you have little Reaſon to be fond of it, for this becomes no Age, and much leſs the more verdant one: But if by Religion you underſtand Devotion towards God, Reverence towards your Parents and Superiours, Temperance and Chaſtity in your ſelves, and ſuch like Virtues; I muſt needs ſay, nothing can appear to me more great and lovely than Religion in Youth; what can better become thoſe who poſſeſs the Gifts of Nature in their Perfection, than Gratitude to the God of Nature? What can be a greater Glory to the Young, than Obe-

dience to Parents, and Reverence to their Elders and Superiors? What does more preſerve, or better become Strength than Sobriety and Temperance? What is a more charming or more laſting Ornament to Beauty than Modeſty and Chaſtity? After all this, 'tis a vain thing to comfort your ſelves with ſaying, That the Grave and Wiſe, when they had the ſame Inclinations you now have, did as you do, indulge and gratifie them: For *firſt*, this is not generally true; and *ſecondly*, the leſs they did it, the more were they honoured and beloved; but *thirdly*, if they did, 'tis certain that they have bitterly condemned it, and repented of it: And is it not ſtrangely abſurd, that you ſhould propoſe to your ſelves nothing in the Lives of the Wiſe and Virtuous, but their Frailties and Errors for your Example; that you ſhould pitch upon that only for your Imitation, which all the Wiſe and Good deteſt and bemoan, as their Sin and Shame, and think it their higheſt Wiſdom to do ſo.

To conclude this Addreſs to the Younger ſort, unleſs there be any who are poſſeſſed with a Spirit of Infidelity, againſt which I will not now enter the Liſts, all the

the pretences you can poſſibly form for your deferring to devote your ſelves inſtantly to Wiſdom and Religion, are founded in two Suppoſitions, of which the one is falſe, and the other abſurd: The falſe one is, that Sin is a State of Pleaſure, Virtue of Trouble and Uneaſineſs; the contrary of which is, I think, ſufficiently demonſtrated through this whole Treatiſe; and would you but be prevailed with to taſte the Pleaſures of a ſincere Virtue, your Experience would ſoon confute this Fancy: What madneſs then is it to be afraid of becoming happy too ſoon! Ah! how differently are we affected under the Maladies of the Mind and of the Body! Did the Lame or Blind the Lepers, the Lunaticks, or Demoniacks, ever entreat our Lord to defer their Cure, and give them leave to enjoy their Miſeries, Diſeaſes, and Devils a little longer? The other Suppoſition is abſurd, which is, That you will Repent hereafter. Muſt you then Repent hereafter? Muſt this be the Fruit of all your ſinful Pleaſures; Guilt and Remorſe, Grief and Fear, Diſtreſs and Agony of Soul? Do Revelation and Reaſon, Death and Judgment; do all your ſober and retired Thoughts

Thoughts preach you this one Leſſon, *Repentance?* and yet can you reſolve to plunge you ſelves in that filthineſs which muſt be waſhed off with Tears? can you reſolve to indulge thoſe cheating and deceitful Luſts which will one day fill your Soul with Shame and Sorrow, with Diſtraction Horror and Amazement? Ah Infatuation! ah Bewitchery! that ever a rational Creature ſhould live in ſuch an open defiance and hoſtility againſt his Reaſon! and yet, if *Repentance*, after many Years, and innumerable Sins, would be more eaſie; if your Sins would be more eaſily conquered, or more eaſily attoned; this Frenzy would not want ſome little colour; but how contrary is this to Truth? Which puts me in mind of another ſort of Readers, to whom I am now to apply my ſelf, namely,

Secondly, To thoſe who are advanced in years. 'Tis obſerved of *Cæſar*, by *Suetonius*, that lighting upon the Statue of *Alexander the Great* in the Temple of *Hercules* at *Gades*, and reflecting on himſelf, that he had yet done nothing remarkable at thoſe years, wherein that (in *Cæſar's* Notion of Gallantry) Brave and Gallant Man had over-run all the *Eaſt*, he did ſweat

ſweat and bluſh under the keen reproaches of his own Mind, and groaned under the uneaſie Conſcience of his Sloth, and preſently deſired to be diſmiſſed from his Queſtorſhip, that he might purſue Glory and Immortality, Fame and Dominion. Had you but one ſpark, I will not ſay of the Zeal of a Chriſtian, but of this generoſity of a Pagan, you would bluſh at the Soul, to think that you have not yet buckled on the Armour of Light, at an Age in which many others have been covered with Lawrels; that you have not yet ſtarted forth at thoſe years, in which ſome others have finiſhed, tho' not their Race, yet all the difficulties of it; the miſerable Account that you will give of Thirty, Forty, peradventure of Fifty years! I will not ſay that you have lived to no purpoſe, but to the worſt imaginable; ignorant, enſlaved to Luſt, oppreſſed by Guilt! All that you have done is, *You have treaſured up wrath againſt the day of wrath:* For this to be the product of ſo many years! Shame and Confuſion! But greater, infinitely greater to go on thus. Sin may to ſome ſeem the Misfortune of Youth, but 'tis unqueſtionably the Reproach of Age: Unhappy Nature,

Nature, and unhappy Education bear a ſhare of the Imputation in Youth; but in theſe years your own Obſtinacy and Choice engroſs the whole Guilt. Young People are like weak Barks, which in Boyſterous Seas and Winds carry too much Sail, and too little Ballaſt; their Judgment is weak and unreſolved, and their Paſſions light and violent as Hurricanes; but riper years do, or ſhould, bring on naturally wiſer and ſtancher thoughts, cooler, ſedater tempers; and therefore certainly Sin in theſe carries a deeper Guilt and Shame in it: The raw unexperienced Sinner periſheth whilſt he but taſtes and gazes; the Virgin Soul coming into a ſtrange World, is deflour'd whilſt it gratifies its Curioſity and Fancy, like *Dinah* when ſhe went forth only to ſee the Daughters of the Land: But the full-grown Sinner ſins againſt, not only the Preacher's Inſtruction, but his own Experience too; he repeats thoſe Sins which he has often confeſſed to be his Folly and his Shame, and returns like fooliſh Mariners, to thoſe treacherous Seas where they were Shipwrack'd but the other day: If this be not to outrage Conſcience, defie Reaſon,

Reaſon and dare God, what is? No, you'l ſay, you too, do reſolve to repent hereafter: Hereafter? how ill does this word ſound in one who does begin to bow already under the weight of years? Hereafter! how ill does this Language become this decaying mouldring Body? But ſuppoſe the Wheels of Time would ſtop, tho' running now down a headlong Precipice; ſuppoſe your Sun would for a while ſtand ſtill, yet what a work have you to finiſh! what Guilt to expiate! what Sins to vanquiſh! and what a *Day of Judgment* to prepare for! Are theſe ſlight Conſiderations? Will your Sins, think you, be eaſily attoned? when their number is ſwoll'n, not only by length of time, but alſo by an uncontrouled Licentiouſneſs? For a Novice in Sin, is aw'd by Modeſty, held in by Scruples, and diſcouraged by Regret and Remorſe; but the Veteran Sinner is carried away by a Torrent of debauched Affections, and repeats his Follies with a relentleſs Confidence and an Authority that brooks no Oppoſition. Will it be an eaſie Task to ſubdue thoſe Sins, which have maintained

ned a long and undiſturbed Dominion, and exerciſed an abſolute Sovereignty over you? What ſhall awaken that Sinner, who, like *Solomon*'s Drunkard, *Prov.* 23.35. is inſenſible of Stripes and Wounds; and alas! when rouſed out of the Arms of his *Dalilah*, his Locks, like *Sampſon*'s, are cut off, the Spirits retired, his Strength impaired, and the Force of his Enemy Augmented; and with what will he Conquer? Is it, laſtly, a trivial Thing to appear before the Judgment Seat of God, that you ſhould think a Moment will ſerve turn to prepare for it? I will ſuppoſe the Judge of the whole World as merciful as you can deſire him, if you will ſuppoſe him too, with Reverence be it ſpoke, to have ſo much Senſe as not to be impoſed on, ſo much Integrity as to expect Sincerity, tho' not Perfection; and this alone will make that *Judgment* formidable. I very much fear that both Young and Old do entertain too mild and favourable a Notion of that Day, and ſo elude and baffle the Force of the moſt powerful Motive to Virtue and Religion the Goſpel has; I ſhall not therefore

therefore wander far from the purpoſe of this Paragraph, if I cloſe this Exhortation *to begin to live immediately*, with a ſhort Reflection on that Day.

We muſt firſt bid adieu to this World, to every thing in it that's dear to us, and die e'er we can go and appear before God; what a perfect Mortification of all our Senſual Appetites is neceſſary, e'er we can calmly part with all here below! What a long Experience of Love and Duty is neceſſary to confirm and aſſure the Soul againſt all its Fears and Apprehenſions! What a vigorous Faith to carry us through this dark Paſſage into another World! when we are got there, what a ſtrict Trial are we to undergo! There all Diſguiſes will be taken off, and every thing appear in its naked Nature: There all our Superſtructures of Hay and Stubble will be burnt up, only pure ſolid Virtue will bear the Teſt: There darling Vices will not paſs under the Diſguiſe of Sins and Infirmity: There an honeſt Sloth and harmleſs Luxury, will not be

be thought Innocent enough to entitle Men to Heaven: There ſome few good Fits will not paſs for godly Sorrow, nor ſome feeble and ſhort-liv'd Attempts for Repentance and a Change: There the effects of a lucky Conſtitution, will not be Crowned as the Works of Grace, and Fruits of the Divine Life: There, in a word, Talk will not paſs for Action, nor Cenſure of others, commute for Mortification in our ſelves: Finally, nothing ſhall be rewarded there but a Conquering Faith, an Active Charity, an humble, conſtant Zeal, patient perſevering Hopes, ſpiritual Joys, and pious Fears. This needs no Application; Begin, begin to live before you die, begin to repent and reform before you be judged.

Sect. 3. A Third way of *Improving Life* is to avoid and cut off all thoſe things that are injurious to it: Such are Sloth that waſts, and Impertinence that embroils it: Coldneſs or Remiſneſs in Religion that diſpirits and dilutes, Levity and Inconſtancy that diſ-

order

order and confound it: And finally, all thoſe Evils that ſour and imbitter it. I am ſenſible that theſe Heads occur often, and thô it be under different Aſpects, yet 'tis poſſible that I may ſometimes light upon the ſame Thoughts, nay, peradventure the very ſame words; 'tis againſt my will if I do; but I want ſight to reviſe my Papers, and am glad to disburden my Memory as faſt as I can, and therefore charge it with nothing that I have once entruſted to Writing; and the toil of recollecting my Thoughts, ſcattered up and down like *Sybil*'s Oracles in diſperſed Leaves, by a hand which 'tis impoſſible for me to direct or animate, is moſt intolerable: If therefore I ſlip into any Error of this kind, which I ſhall very unwillingly, I cannot but preſume of pardon, having ſo juſt an Excuſe. But I proceed.

Firſt, We muſt avoid Idleneſs. Sloth is the Ruſt of Time; Sleep is an Image of Death, and Sloth of Sleep; The Life of the Sluggiſh is but a waking Dream, a Vacation from all Buſineſs and true Enjoyment too, a Ceſſation and Stop, though not of Time, which ſtill runs on, yet of the very Powers and Faculties

of the Soul, whereas Life conſiſts in the Exerciſe of both: How remote then muſt Idleneſs be from improving or exalting Life? It never ploughs nor ſows, and therefore never reaps; it never plants nor ſets, and therefore never gathers any Fruit; nothing great was ever performed by it, nothing great ever enjoyed by it: And ſhall the richeſt Fruit that ever grew upon any of the Trees of Paradiſe, Wiſdom, and Virtue, *i. e.* Knowledge and Life, be gathered by a ſluggiſh hand? No, thô no Angel or flaming Sword do ſtop his way, yet are there Difficulties in it, too many and too great for this heavy daſtardly Animal to conquer. *Plato*, as I remember, tells us ſome where, that a God tied Pain and Pleaſure by the Tails together; there is no coming at the one by him who ſhuns the other: So is the World contrived, that even Temporal and ſeeming Goods cannot be obtained without the travel of the Mind, and toil of the Body; and yet what lean, ſtarved, and beggarly Bleſſings are theſe, compared to thoſe I treat of! The rich Man may ſtarve for want of true Pleaſure in the midſt of his glittering Heaps: Sor-

row

row may ſit heavy on the Heart of the Conqueror, or the Bride, even on the Days of ſolemn Triumph and Feſtival noiſe: The Prince may be a Slave, an Egyptian Slave, even while he reigns with abſolute and uncontrouled Power: But Life and Pleaſure, Content and Happineſs, are the inſeparable Companions of Wiſdom and Virtue: Let no Man therefore flatter himſelf with the Hopes of ſuch a Treaſure, who lives idlely and at his eaſe; he muſt pray, meditate, watch, and excerciſe himſelf in Induſtry, Sobriety, and Purity, who will overcome the Corruptions of his Nature, and obtain the Tranquillity and Liberty of a true Criſtian. Nor let this frighten any Man; for thoſe Duties which are a little troubleſome in the beginning, do ſoon grow eaſie and delightful too. In this ſenſe muſt we underſtand that of the Author of *Eccleſiaſticus*, Chap. 4. 17, 18. though rendered a little harſhly: *For at the firſt ſhe* (that is, Wiſdom) *will walk with him by crooked ways, and bring fear and dread upon him, torment him with her Diſcipline until ſhe may truſt his Soul, and try him by her Laws. Then will ſhe return the ſtraight-way unto him, and com-*

fort him, and ſhew him her ſecrets.

Secondly, Impertinence, or being buſied and imployed in Trifles, is indeed as different from Sloth as Motion from Reſt; but yet ſuch a wretched Conſumption of Time cannot deſerve the Name of Life; for this is not Activity of Soul, but a poor and mean debaſing of it: Fancy, and that a ſilly and extrvagant one, may be ſaid to live, but Reaſon cannot. That Idlenes,which conſiſts in heavy paſſive Dulneſs,is like a ſtate of Sleep without Dream or Fancy; that which conſiſts in a fluttering and impertinent Activity, is nothing elſe but a giddy Ferment of the Spirits, and Agitation of the Fancy, the incoherent disjoynted Thoughts, the confuſed and fruitleſs Projects and Attempts of a Dream; and we may almoſt as properaly ſay of him that Dreams, that he Eats and Drinks, Fights or Travels, or whatever he Fancies himſelf to do, as we can of this ſort of Sluggard, that he lives. 'Tis true, could a Man be for ever Impertinent this ſort of Idleneſs would ſeem to ſome Men to have no great Evil in it; but how could ſuch a Mind bear the ſhock of Humane Misfortunes? How could ſuch a Soul

diſcharge the great Duties of Humane Society? How could it entertain it ſelf with Objectsi agreable to a RationalNature? And if it could do noneof theſe things, 'tis mpoſſible to conceive how it could be other than miſerable; for thô we could ſupoſe ſuch a Creature to be ſo meer a Trifle as never to be nearly concern'd in any Changes of Fortune, nor ever called upon by that Community he belongs to, that is, I ſhould almoſt ſay, never to be regarded or minded, either by God or Man; yet ſtill ſuch a one did no way live up to the Excellence of his Nature; his Buſineſs and Enjoyment were not Manly and Rational, and his Childiſh Life were therefore only pretty and pleaſing to him, becauſe he had a Childiſh and Silly Soul.

Nor is the Grave much better than the Gay *Impertinent*; or the Man of Buſineſs, if he neglect the main, the one thing neceſſary, to be preferred before the Man of Mode: Senſuality, 'tis true, ſoftens, and Drudgery hardens the Mind, but both alike intoxicate it, both wed it to this, and alienate it from the other World: It imports very little to what Idol one do Sacrifice, whether *Aſh-*

taroth.

taroth, *Moloch*, or *Mammon*, if we Sacrifice not to the true God. In vain do they pretend to any other Art, who are ignorant of the Art of Living, to plod or drudge, intrigue or trade, canvas and court, 'tis all but ſolemn Impertinence, if Virtue and Religion be neglected: Ah! what Phantoms, and Clouds, and Dreams do Men purſue and hunt after, inſtead of Life and Peace, of Reſt and Pleaſure!

Thirdly, Remiſſneſs or Lukewarmneſs in Religion, a ſort of Neutrality between Vice and Virtue, is the next thing to be avoided: We can never truly Live, unleſs we be intirely Uniform, unleſs we be wholly given up, and without reſerve, to the Conduct of Reaſon. There is little Pleaſure in Religion, if there be no ardour and fervency in it: 'Tis Love makes the Duty eaſie, and the Proſpect delightful. If there be no Strength in Faith, no Life in Devotion, no Spirit in Duty, no Deſire in Hope, this is Religion without a Soul, 'tis the Carkas of an unanimated Virtue; what Peace, what Aſſurance, what Joy, what Tranſport, can ever be the Portion of ſuch a Chriſtian?

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Levity and Inconſtancy is the laſt thing I will now mention, and the moſt irreconcileable Enemy to *Life*. For this does not only interrupt the Courſe of *Life*, or like Sleep or Sloth, make a vaſt Chaſm or Gap in it, but puts us more back than we had advanced forward; an unhappy guſt of Wind that throws us of to Sea again, when we were almoſt come to Shore: If we will reap the Fruit of Victory, we muſt purſue it; if we will find reſt, we muſt be ſtedfaſt and unmoveable; if we will enjoy Vertue, we muſt unite and incorporate it with us; 'tis impoſſible that the unconſtant, unſtable Proſelyte of Virtue ſhould either have a pleaſant Life, or a comfortable Death; for if he build to day what he pulled down yeſterday, if he practiſe one hour what he condemns another, 'tis impoſſible he ſhould pleaſe himſelf, much leſs his God.

To ſhun the Evils, and make the moſt of the Goods of Life, is none of the leaſt important Rules conducing to Happineſs, and might properly enough be inſiſted on here. But I begin to tire; and ſince this may better be reduced under the Heads of *Indolence* and *Fruition*, I will defer

defer the Conſideration of it till I come to treat of them, which I may one time or other do, if I ſee Reaſon for it, if not, I would not willingly be impertinent; if I cannot *ſerve* the *World*, I will not trouble it.

FINIS.